

THE
WANDERINGS
OF THE
HEART and MIND:
OR
MEMOIRS
OF
Mr. de MEILCOUR.

Translated from the FRENCH of
by de Crebillon
Mr. de CREBILLON the Son.

By MICHAEL CLANCY, M. D.

L O N D O N:

Printed for JOHN NOURSE, at the *Lamb* over against
Katharine-street in the *Strand*.

MDCCLI.

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M. E. M. R. S.

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T O

Mr. de *CREBILLON*,

Member of the *French ACADEMY*.

S I R,

I AM sensible I ought to have delay'd giving you this public testimony of my duty, until I cou'd offer you something more worthy your protection; but I flatter myself that in what I am now doing, you will only consider my zeal and affection. Attach'd to you by the strictest ties of blood, we are, if I may venture to say it, still more united by the most sincere and tender friendship. But why shou'd I not say it? Do fathers require no more than respect? Is that alone equal to the immense debt? —no——it must be pleasing, it must be delightful to them to observe, how gratitude encreases and strengthens in the hearts of their children, those sentiments of love, which nature has there ingrav'd. For my part, I have ever found myself the object of your tenderness and anxiety; am I then to fear that you, my friend, my comfort-er, my support, will find in these sweet appellations which you so justly deserve, the least infringement of respect? On the contrary, shou'd I not be unde-

serving of your having ever prov'd your just title to them; wou'd I once think of depriving you of them: And if ever my weak talents have the good fortune to gain a small portion of the public esteem, if posterity, in speaking of you, can remember I have existed, that honour will be entirely due to the generous care you have taken of my education, and the ardent desire I always had of meriting, that you shou'd one day own me with less regret. I am, with the most profound respect,

SIR,

Your most Humble,

and most Obedient Son,

and Servant,

CREBILLON.

THE PREFACE.

TO impose on the reader seems to be the chief purpose of most prefaces; a custom I despise too much to follow. The true intent of this, is to illustrate the following memoirs, without pretending to say whether they ought to be look'd upon merely as the Work of imagination, or as adventures founded on real facts.

A Writer can have but two things in view, the useful and the entertaining. Few authors have been so happy as to unite both. He who instructs, either disdains, or has not talent for entertaining, and he who entertains, has not solidity enough to instruct; it necessarily follows, that the one is always insipid, and the other frivolous.

Romance, so despis'd by people of sense, and often justly, might perhaps, with proper management, become the standard of useful writing; if, instead of those obscure forced passages, instead of Heroes whose characters and adventures exceed the bounds of probability, it were like comedy, made to represent human life and expose vice and folly.

'Tis true, the reader wou'd no longer meet with those extraordinary and tragical events which rend the heart and intoxicate the brain; no more Heroes passing the seas for no other purpose than just to be taken by the Turks; no more adventures in the seraglio, no Sultanas escaping the vigilance of their eunuchs by some surprising stroke of love policy; no unexpected, and by no means

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means any more subterraneous Deaths. The story prepared with art, wou'd be told naturally. Probability and reason wou'd resume their empire; all extravagance wou'd be banish'd from sentiment. Man, in fine, wou'd see man such as he really is, less dazzled indeed, but more instructed.

At the same time I am sensible, that several readers who are not to be touch'd by nature and simplicity, will never consent to have romances stript of those pompous puerilities, which make them so charming in their eyes; but that, in my mind, is no reason against reforming their abuses, every age, nay, every year brings a new taste, and we see authors who only write in compliance to the mode, victims to their mean complaisance, fall with that mode, into eternal oblivion. True taste alone will ever subsist, and tho' a shoal of scribblers may rise up against it, tho' they may endeavour to spread darkness over it, all their efforts will never be sufficient to destroy it. Writers, who are constrain'd by the servile fear of not sufficiently pleasing their own times, are seldom transmitted to posterity.

I confess, those romances which are intended to paint man in his proper colours, besides their too great sameness, are subject to many inconveniencies. There is a set of refin'd readers, who never look into a book but with a view to applications, and esteem it not unless they think they have discovered something, which intitles them to reflect dishonour on particular persons, and to which they are sure to add the whole weight of their own spleen and malice. Might not the World fairly conclude, that these profound searchers, whose penetration nothing can escape, do themselves the justice to think in their own minds, whatever specious pretences they make use of, that the ridicule they are in such haste to apply to others, might much more properly be attributed to them? However, this is the reason why Authors are sometimes accus'd of traducing persons, whom

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whom they do not know or perhaps greatly respect, and are look'd upon as the pest of society, when in reality the venom comes from their readers. X

But let what will be the consequence, I see nothing that can or ought to hinder an author from searching into the very bosom of nature, and drawing from thence his characters and portraits. Applications are temporary, people either grow tir'd of making them, or they are so trifling they die away of themselves. Besides, where is there not subject matter for these ingenious reflections? The most licentious fictions, as well as the soundest treatise of morality, equally furnish materials, and by what I can find hitherto, books only that treat of abstruse sciences have been exempt.

When a prude and a fop are exhibited, neither Mrs. nor Mr. such a one, whom perhaps the author never saw, were the objects of his contemplation. But nothing is more obvious than that, if the one be a prude and the other a fop, the portrait will resemble in some shape, otherwise it would be useless and unmeaning; but it should not follow, from this general eagerness to find out likenesses, that vice is no longer to be lash'd and ridicule expos'd. After all, these discoveries are commonly so uncertain, that, if in one quarter of the town you hear people cry — How plainly this appears to be the marchioness, in another you hear them say — who could think the countess cou'd be so easily taken off! The court guesses a third, as little thought of by the author as the other too.

I have dwelt longer on this article, because these memoirs being only the history of the private life, extravagancies, and reformation of a young nobleman, some people may be tempted to attribute the portraits interspers'd, and the adventures they contain, to persons now alive, which will be the less difficult, that our manners are here described, Paris the scene of action,

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action, no necessity for travelling into imaginary regions, and nothing is disguised under barbarous names and customs. As for any advantageous pictures that may be met with, I know not what to say; virtue in a woman, and good sense in a man are, it seems, emanations of reason applicable to no one.

Here a man will be seen, such as most men are in extreme youth, simple at first and without art, ignorant of the World he is obliged to live in. The first and second part are the subject of this ignorance and his first amours. The third shews him full of false ideas, abandoned to folly, into which he gives less from his own inclinations, than at the instigation of persons interested in the corruption of his heart and mind. In the last, restor'd at length to himself, he will be seen to owe his relish for virtue to the care and attention of an inestimable woman. Such are the ends propos'd by the wanderings of the heart and mind. We do not pretend to have describ'd man with all the disorders into which his passions are apt to plunge him: Here Love alone presides; or if now and then other matters seem to interfere, love is still the ground-work.

THE

MEMOIRS

Monfieur de *MEILCOUR*,

PART I.

I ENTER'D the world at seventeen years of age, and with all the advantages necessary to make me conspicuous in it. My father had left me a great name, of which he had himself contributed to raise the splendor; and I expected a considerable fortune from my mother, who, tho' left a widow at an age when youth, beauty and riches, intitled her to the most advantageous offers, mov'd by her tenderness for me, consider'd no other pleasure but that of taking care of my youth, and supplying the place of all I had lost in losing my father.

SUCH a project, I believe, would have entered into the minds of few women, and fewer still wou'd have punctually executed it. But Madam de *Meilcour*, who, as I have been told, was not a coquet in her youth, nor given to gallantry, that ever I cou'd perceive in a more advanced age, had fewer difficulties to surmount than most ladies of her rank commonly find.

Part I.

A

WHAT'S

WHAT's very uncommon, I was bred up with some notions of humility. Naturally I was inclin'd to have as good an opinion of myself as I deserv'd; 'tis usual in this way of thinking, to entertain a better than one is intitled to. If my mother did not succeed so far as to extinguish all pride in me, she oblig'd me at least to keep it within bounds. In process of time I was not the less a fop, but without her precautions I should have been one sooner, and perhaps without remedy.

AT my first setting out, my thoughts were entirely taken up with notions of pleasure. Peace, which was then universal, subjected me to a dangerous inactivity. The little care commonly taken by men of my age and quality to keep themselves employ'd, a wrong bias, liberty, example, every thing hurried me into luxury. My passions were impetuous, or, to speak more justly, I had a fiery imagination, very susceptible of impression.

IN the midst of the hurry and splendor that continually surrounded me, I felt every thing wanting to my unsatisfied heart. I long'd for a felicity of which I had no very distinct idea; for some time I did not comprehend the sort of pleasure that was necessary for me. In vain I strove to shake off the inward weariness with which I found myself oppress'd; the society of women cou'd alone dissipate it. Unacquainted as yet with all the violence of the inclination that push'd me towards them, I sought their company on all occasions. I could not see them long, and be ignorant, that they alone cou'd

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cou'd give that happinefs, thofe pleasing errors of the foul, no other amufement cou'd afford; age ftrengthening this difpofition to tendernes, and rendering me ftill more fenfible to their charms, I thought of nothing but engaging in an amour, let it be what it wou'd.

MANY difficulties attended this refolution: I was attach'd to no particular object, and I met with none that did not equally ftrike me: I feared chufing, nor was I well at liberty to make a choice. The sentiments with which one woman inspired me, were quickly deftroyed by thofe another gave rife to.

WE are more feldom attached to the woman that affects us moft, than to her from whom we expect leaft oppofition. No man ever proved this ftronger than I did. My ambition was to be in love, but I knew not where to fix: I thought myfelf really enamour'd of her only, from whom I dreaded the leaft feverities; but as it happened me fometimes in the fame day, to meet with favourable looks from more than one, I found myfelf greatly perplex'd at night when I was about to chufe. Was the choice determin'd? how, declare it to the object that had fixed me?

I HAD fo little experience of women, that a declaration of love appear'd to me an offence offer'd the perfon to whom it was made. Befides, I fear'd I fhould not be liften'd to; and I look'd upon a

repulse of that nature to be the cruelest affront a man cou'd receive. To these considerations, was joined a bashfulness of which nothing cou'd get the better, and that, had I even met with encouragement, wou'd have made me let slip the fairest opportunity: In such a case I shou'd, no doubt, have carry'd respect to the degree, when it becomes an insult on woman, and ridiculous in man.

ONE may easily judge by this detail, that I had not form'd a very just notion of the fair-sex. According to the then fashionable way of thinking, it was infinitely more dangerous to attempt proving a passion by a respectful distance and a delicacy of thought, than by an immediate and abrupt declaration of love; for love once so delicate, so sincere, so respectful, was now become so inconsiderate and easy, that it cou'd have appear'd formidable but to one so little knowing as I was.

WHAT both sexes then call'd love, was a sort of commerce in which they engag'd mostly without a liking, wherein conveniency was ever prefer'd to sympathy, interest to pleasure, and vice to sentiment.

THREE times a woman was told she was handsome; more was unnecessary: the first time she certainly believ'd you, thank'd you the second, and most commonly rewarded you the third.

NAY,

NAY, sometimes it happen'd a man had no business to speak, and, what will seem incredible in such an age of wisdom as ours, very often his answer was not waited for.

To please, there was no necessity for a man to be in love; on pressing occasions he was even dispens'd with being amiable. An affair was always decided at first sight; but at the same time it rarely happen'd that the next day saw it subsist: and yet this sudden breaking off did not always prevent disgust.

To make society more agreeable, it was agreed that all ceremony should be retrench'd; something was still wanting to make things easier; decency was suppress'd.

If we believe ancient memoirs, formerly women were more flatter'd by creating respect than desires; and in all appearance they were no losers by it. The topick of love, 'tis true, was not so quickly enter'd on, but the passion they once inspired was the more grateful and durable.

THEY imagin'd in those days they ought never to surrender, and in effect they resisted. The women in my time thought it impossible to defend themselves, and, thus prejudiced, yielded the very instant they were attack'd.

HOWEVER, it must not be infer'd from what I have said, that they all shew'd the same facility. I

have known some who after fifteen days courtship were yet undetermin'd; nay, not compleatly defeated at the end of a whole month. I confess these examples were rare, and seem'd not to be allow'd as precedents; and, if I don't mistake, women who carried their cruelties to such lengths, pass'd for being a little prudish.

SINCE that time there has been such a prodigious alteration in manners, I shall not be surpriz'd if what I have said on this article be now treated as a fable. We believe with difficulty that either virtues or vices which are not immediately under our own eyes ever existed, yet all I have advanc'd is certainly true, and nothing's exaggerated.

So far was I from knowing how love was carried on in the world, that I imagined, notwithstanding what I every day saw, a superior merit was necessary to please the sex; and whatever secret good opinion I had of my own merit, I cou'd never bring myself to think I was worthy to be belov'd. Had I known women better, I am certain I shou'd not have been less timorous. Lessons and example are of little use to a young man, he is never to be instructed but at his own expence.

WHAT had I to do in these circumstances? To consult Madam de *Meilcour* about my perplexities, was a thing not to be done: And among all the young men with whom I was acquainted, not one had more experience than myself, or, at least, had
acquir'd

acquired that experience which might be uſeful to me. For ſix months was I thus cruelly agitated, and no doubt ſhou'd have remain'd much longer ſo, had not one of the ladies, who made the deepeſt impreſſion on me, been ſo good as take upon her the care of my education.

THE Marchionefs of *Lurſay* ſaw me almoſt every day, either at her own or my mother's houſe; a ſtrict friendſhip ſubſiſted between them. She had known me from my infancy. The care ſhe had always taken to ſay obliging things to me, ſometimes commending my underſtanding, ſometimes my figure, her freedom with me, and my conſtantly ſeeing her, had made me very much her friend. I had habituated myſelf to a ſort of eaſe and familiarity with her, which I did not dare to aſſume with any other woman. From theſe tender beginnings I roſe inſenſibly to a deſire of pleaſing her; the impreſſion ſhe made was the moſt continued, becauſe I ſaw her moſt frequently. Not that I imagin'd I ſhould find it leſs difficult to gain her affections than another's. Far from flattering myſelf with ſo pleaſing an idea, the little hopes I had of ſucceeding with her made me often carry my vows elſewhere; but after two days infidelity I uſed to return to her more in love, and more timorous than ever.

IN ſpite of all the care I took to diſguiſe what I felt, ſhe at laſt diſcover'd the ſecret in my breaſt. My reſpect which ſeem'd to augment every day; the confuſion with which I was ſeiz'd

whenever I spoke to her, confusion different from that she had seen with me in my childhood; my looks were more expressive than I thought them, my assiduity to please, my frequent visits, and above all, perhaps, a desire she had herself of engaging me, all contributed to encourage her to think I lov'd her in secret; but in her present situation it was not convenient to hurry my growing inclinations, and embark without precaution in an affair which might be doubtful.

A COQUET once, even somewhat given to gallantry, an adventure, which had fully'd her reputation, had put her out of conceit with the boisterous pleasures of the great world. As susceptible as ever, but more prudent, she was made sensible at last, that weakness is less hurtful to a woman than indiscretion, and that the transports of a lover, tho' not made publick, lose nothing either of sweetness or reality. The air of prudery she had assum'd was not sufficient to hinder the world from being obstinate in suspecting her, and I perhaps, was the only one on whom she impos'd. Come into life, a long time after she had given the publick room to talk of her, it was not surprising I knew nothing of her adventures, and I really believe, had it been then attempted, 'twas impossible to have given me a bad opinion of her. She knew how distant I was from suspecting her to be capable of a weakness, which made her think herself oblig'd to use the utmost circumspection, and not to yield, supposing

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it fhould come to that point, but with all the decency I fhould expect.

HER figure and her age, both contributed to affift her in her undertakings. She was handsome, and her beauty was of that majestic fort, which, without the ferious air ſhe had affum'd, might have eafily commanded refpect. Tho' there was nothing coquettifh in her drefs, yet ſhe was far from neglecting to fet herſelf off to the beſt advantage. At the ſame time ſhe had declar'd ſhe had renounc'd all thoughts of pleaſing, ſhe was in a condition to move the paſſions; in a word, ſhe was particularly careful to repair what near forty years had taken from her charms: nor indeed had ſhe loſt many; and excepting that freſhneſs which diſappears with the bloom of youth, and is often faded before the time by the very means intended to make it more attracting, Madam *Lurſay* had nothing to regret. She was tall and well ſhap'd, and in her affected careleſſneſs, few women made ſo graceful an appearance. A conſtrain'd ſeverity appear'd in her whole compoſition; her eyes, when ſhe was not on her guard, ſparkled with gaiety and tenderneſs.

SPRIGHTLY without giddineſs, prudent even to diſſimulation: ſhe ſpoke well and ſpoke with eaſe: with abundance of delicacy in her ſentiments, ſhe was not demure. She had carefully applied herſelf to the ſtudy of both Sexes, and was perfectly acquainted with every ſpring by which they are actuated.

Patient in revenge as well as pleasure, she knew how to wait from time for what the present moment did not afford, as for the rest, tho' a prude, her mildness and affability, made her agreeable to society. Her system was not, that women shou'd have no weaknesses; but that sentiment alone cou'd make them pardonable; an old beaten argument supported by three parts in four of the whole female world, and that serves only to render more despicable those who dishonour the sex by their conduct.

IN some conversations we had had together on the subject of love, she had got thoroughly acquainted with my character, and knew the reasons that wou'd make me apprehensive of avowing a passion I might have conceiv'd; she believ'd it was of the utmost consequence, in order to gain and even to fix me, that she shou'd dissemble as long as she cou'd, the love she had for me; that the more I was accustomed to respect her, the more I shou'd be astonish'd at any precipitate step taken on her side. She was well appriz'd too of these certainties, that with whatever ardor men pursue victory, they love always in some measure to purchase it, and that women who think they cannot surrender quick enough, have often reason to repent their too great hurry in letting themselves be overcome.

I WAS ignorant, among many other things, that sentiment in the great world was no more than a mere matter of conversation; I used to hear women

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men talk of it with ſuch an air of truth, make ſuch nice diſtinctions about it, deſpiſe with ſo much haughtineſs thoſe who ſwerv'd from it, that I cou'd not conceive how knowing it ſo well they could praſtiſe it ſo little.

PARTICULARLY Madam *Lurſay*, who, by dint of endeavouring to forget her own fatal adventures, imagin'd ſhe had every where effac'd the memory of them, at the ſame time ſhe acknowledg'd that on certain conditions ſhe cou'd bring her heart to love, render'd her conqueſt ſo difficult, required ſo many accompliſhments in the object capable of moving her compaſſion, ſpoke of a method of being ſo ſingular, that I trembled whenever I thought of fixing my inclinations on her.

HOWEVER, this very delicate lady, ſatiſfied at length with my way of thinking on her account, judg'd it was time to give me ſome hopes, and room to believe, but by the moſt decent inſinuations, that I was the happy mortal her heart had made choice of. From general obliging topicks with which ſhe uſed till then to entertain me, ſhe now paſs'd to more particular and intereſting converſations. She look'd on me with tenderneſs, and exhorted me when alone with her to be under leſs conſtraint. By this management ſhe ſucceeded in making me fall deſperately in love with her, and ſhar'd ſo much with me herſelf that I imagine ſhe then wou'd have been glad ſhe had inspir'd me with leſs reſpect.

HER

HER situation by her own contrivances was become as embarrass'd as mine: the business was to make me get the better of the too great diffidence she had given me of myself, and the too good opinion she had made me conceive of her; two things extremely difficult, and that were to be conducted with all the art and dexterity imaginable.

SHE saw no appearance of my daring to tell her I lov'd her, and she was so far from thinking to make the first overtures herself, that she imagin'd it incumbent on her to receive with severity any I shou'd make, supposing she was lucky enough to bring me to that point.

WITH a man of experience, a word, the sense of which may bear another meaning, a look, a gesture, less still, lets him into the secret if he chuses to be lik'd; and if he happens to interpret things differently from what was intended or wish'd, what has been hazarded is so doubtful and of so little consequence that it may instantly be disavow'd.

So far was I from making things so easy to Madam *Lursay*, she had more than once reason to think that my stupidity rather increas'd, at the very time she was endeavouring to open my eyes; more she thought she cou'd not venture, without running the risque of alarming me, or perhaps losing me for ever. We both sigh'd in private, and tho' agreed, were not the nearer our happiness. For two months

months at leaft were we in this ridiculous fituation, when Madam *Lurfay*, impatient of her own torment, and the profound veneration I had for her, refolv'd delivering herfelf from the former, by curing me of the latter.

By a converfation artfully manag'd we often bring about the fubject we find moft difficult to begin with; the incoherence commonly attending it, helps us to an explanation; fuch a variety of matter occurs, that at leaft what we have a mind to fay infenfibly finds its proper place. In the gay world love feems to be the moft pleafing topick, and the more fo, tho' interefting enough in itfelf, becaufe it is generally attended with, and is always a foundation for, fcandal.

I WAS very follicitous in matters of fentiment, and what for information, what for the pleafure of talking of the fituation of my heart, I feldom was in company that I did not endeavour to make the converfation fall on love and its effects. This difpofition was favourable to Madam *Lurfay*, and ſhe refolv'd at laft to take advantage of it.

ONE day that there was a great deal of company at Madam de *Meilcour's*, we happen'd, having both refus'd to play, to be feated juft by one another. This fort of tête à tête made me tremble, tho' I had often wifh'd for it. When abſent I ſaw nothing that wou'd prevent me from declaring my paſſion,

passion, but now I had an opportunity, the very thoughts of it alarmed me.

THO' I was not alone with her, I had not the more assurance, the side of the room in which we were sitting was abandon'd, the rest of the company all engag'd, no third person of course to assist me. These cruel considerations threw me into the greatest anxiety of mind. For a full quarter of an hour was I near to Madam *Lursay* without saying a word. How desirous soever she was to speak to me, not readily finding a pretext to break silence, she follow'd my example of taciturnity.

A COMEDY that was then acting with success, furnished her at length with an opportunity. She ask'd me if I had seen it; I answered her I had. The plot, said she, does not seem to me to be new; but I like the incidents extremely: 'tis wrote with dignity, and the sentiments in it are finely display'd; is not this your opinion of it? I do not pique myself upon being a connoisseur, answer'd I; in general it pleas'd me, but I should find it very difficult to point out either its beauties or defects. Without a perfect knowledge of the drama, replied she, one may venture to decide on certain places; sentiment, for example, is a thing in which nobody can be deceiv'd, 'tis not the understanding that judges there, it is the heart; affecting things equally move the middling, as well as the great genius. I met with several things in this piece touch'd with great art: particularly there is a declaration of love, in my mind, extremely
ly

ly delicate, and the part I esteem moft in the whole play.

It ftruck me too Madam, answer'd I, and I am the more pleas'd with the Author, that I imagine fuch a fituation very difficult to be well treated. For my part, answered ſhe, that is not what I esteem him moft for, to fay one loves is what's every day and very eafily ſaid; if there be any thing pleaſing in the ſituation he deſcribes, it is much lefs on its own account than the newnefs of the manner in which he handles the ſubject. I cannot, Madam, be entirely of your opinion, for I do not believe it is ſo eafy a matter to fay one loves.

SUCH a confeſſion, Sir, I own coſts a woman dear; a thouſand reaſons which love can never abſolutely deſtroy, muſt make it painful to her; but you ſurely cannot imagine a man runs any fort of riſque.

PARDON me, Madam, that's the very thing I was thinking. Nothing, as I imagine, can be more mortifying to a man, than to fay he loves. What a pity it is, reply'd ſhe, that ſuch a notion ſhou'd be counted ridiculous, tho' perhaps its novelty may gain it credit. How! Sir, mortifying to a man to fay he loves! Yes, undoubtedly, when he is not certain of being belov'd. And by what means wou'd you have him find it out? the avowal of his tenderneſs can alone authoriſe her grateful return. Can you think, let her heart be ever ſo much diſordered, it would
become

become her to speak first, expose herself by such a step to a diminution of his love, and be the object of his refusal ?

FEW women, Madam, would have that to fear.

ALL wou'd have it to fear, who shou'd take upon them to make the first advances ; you wou'd cease, the moment you were offered an easy conquest, to have the least liking for her who before had made the deepest impression on you.

NOTHING, Madam, cou'd be more unreasonable : We owe, I shou'd think, more obligations to the person who spares us torment——

No doubt, interrupted she, but you think wrong for your own interest as well as ours. You, who seem now to cry out against the injustice of men, wou'd behave exactly as they do, were you to meet a woman ready and willing to prevent your sighs.

HEAVENS ! how much I shou'd be oblig'd to her, cried I, how the pleasure in being prevented wou'd inflame my love !

To be so sensibly touch'd with that pleasure, you must indeed have form'd to yourself a frightful Idea of a declaration of love. But after all, Sir, what do you see in it so terrible ? Is it any apprehension of not being listen'd to ? I do not believe that will ever

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ver be your caſe : perhaps it is the ſhame of being forced to acknowledge your love ? but that's impoſſible, you can have no ſuch childiſh Idea.

ANN pray, Madam, do you look upon the confuſion attending ſuch declarations to be nothing, particularly to me, who I am ſure ſhou'd go very awkwardly about them ? The moſt elegant declarations are not always the beſt receiv'd ; a lover's wit may amuſe, but can never perſuade alone : his anxieties, the difficulty he has in expreſſing himſelf, the incoherence of what he does utter ; theſe are the things that make a lover dangerous. But, I aſk'd her, theſe proofs, Madam, which to me indeed appear incontestable, are they always ſure of perſuading ? Not always ; the confuſion I am talking of, proceeds ſometimes more from ſtupidity than love ; then there is no account made of it : beſides, ſome men have artifice enough to diſſemble uneaſineſs and paſſion when they are ſcarcely animated by deſire, in ſuch a caſe they are not believ'd. It may happen too that a perſon falls in love with you for whom you have no ſort of inclination, then eloquence in all its force, will never be able to prevail.

You ſee then, Madam, I was not in the wrong to imagine a refusal ſo cruel a thing ; I doubt even whether I ought not to prefer the uncertainty I am in to an explanation, which cou'd only make me feel more ſenſibly how little I am to be lik'd.

You

YOU are the only one who ever thought an explanation so inconvenient, and, as to your own particular, you argue very unjustly. It is more advantageous, nay, it is more reasonable to speak one's mind than obstinately to persist in silence. By silence you are in danger of losing the pleasure of knowing you are lov'd; and supposing you cannot be answered as you cou'd wish, you are cur'd at once of a passion that wou'd only serve to make your life miserable. But I have observ'd that, for some time past, you take all opportunities of talking to me on this subject; If I am not mistaken a declaration of love appears troublesome to you because you have occasion to make one.

MADAM *Lursay*, in making this obliging reflection, look'd at me so earnestly, and with so animated an air, that she put me quite out of countenance.

YOUR silence and confusion, continued she, sufficiently inform me that my conjectures are right; but I pretend to make no other use of the secret I have surpriz'd from you than to undeceive you, and if it lies in my power to be of service to you. First then, you must tell me, who is the object of your passion, young and unexperienc'd as you are, perhaps you have chosen too lightly. Shou'd your choice be unworthy of you, I shall pity you, but shall not rest there: my counsels may help you to get the better of a passion, or rather a fancy, which,
by

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by what I can perceive, has not yet been nourish'd with hope, and of which confequently I fhall be the better able to fhew you the ridiculousnefs: but, on the other fide, fhould your choice be fuch as neither reafon or honour can murmur at, far from endeavouring to force from your heart the dear idea you have there fix'd, I will teach you all the arts of pleafing, and give you notice myfelf of the progrefs of your love.

MADAM *Lurfay's* kind propofal aftonifhed me; tho' there was nothing fevere in her manner, and her eyes fpoke the moft tender language, I had not power to return her an answer. My looks wander'd over her without daring to fix on her: I fear'd ſhe wou'd take notice of my confuſion; at length ſilence was broke by a ſigh, which forc'd its way in ſpite of me; and which I endeavour'd in vain to hide from her.

BUT how can you be ſo childiſh, ſaid ſhe with an air of compaſſion, I no longer doubt of your being in love; your very ſilence adds viſibly to your torment. How can you tell, but your love is more than equally return'd? wou'd you look upon the pleaſure in being told ſo as nothing? In ſhort, *Meilcour*, I inſiſt upon it, my friendship for you obliges me to ſpeak to you in this manner, tell me who is the object of your love? alas! Madam, answered I trembling, I ſhou'd quickly be puniſh'd for having told it.

OUR

OUR discourse cou'd now be no longer equivocal; and so Madam *Lursay* understood it: but she was not yet quite satisfied, she pretended still she did not comprehend me.

WHAT do you mean, replied she, softening her voice, you wou'd quickly be punish'd for having told it? do you think I have so little discretion?

No, Madam, that is not what I apprehend, but supposing it were my fate to be in love with such a person as you, of what service cou'd it be to declare my passion? Of none, perhaps, answered she, blushing; then I am not in the wrong to persist in silence. Perhaps too you might succeed, continued she; a person of my character, may become susceptible of love, and even more so than another. No, impossible, you never wou'd love me, cried I.

WE are deviating from our subject, Sir; I do not see how I can be concern'd in this. You evade the question I ask'd you, with more art than I thought you capable of; but to pursue this new subject since we have enter'd on it, of what consequence cou'd it be to you, that I shou'd not love you? we are never anxious but for the affections of the person we love; and I am far from thinking that to be your case with regard to me; at least, I shou'd be very sorry it were.

AND

AND I, Madam, thou'd be very glad it were not; or I plainly fee by the ftrange alarm you have taken, how miserable your cruelties wou'd make me.

No, Sir, don't think I am alarm'd, to fear your being in love, wou'd be half-owning it in your power to mollify me; the dreaded lover is always neareft being belov'd, and I thou'd be very much concern'd, you imagin'd I have any apprehenfions of that nature. Nor do I flatter myfelf with any fuch thoughts. But, Madam, fupposing I do love you, what will be the confequence?

I DON'T believe, Sir, you expect a pofitive answer to a bare fuppoſition. May I then be fo bold, Madam, as to tell you I fuppoſe nothing.

AT this precise declaration Madam *Lurſay* fetch'd a figh, bluſhed, turn'd her eyes languifhingly on me, there fix'd them for a time, then look'd down on her fan, and was ſilent. During this ſilence, I was agitated by a thouſand different emotions. The effort I had made on myſelf to ſay what I did, had almoſt depreſs'd me, and the dread of not receiving a favourable answer, made me not very earneſt in preſſing one; however, ſince I had opened my mind, I thought it beſt not to loſe that advantage.

HAVE you nothing more to adviſe me, Madam? ſaid I, half dead with fear, will you not tell me what

what I am to expect from the choice I have made? can you be so cruel, after all the marks of goodness you have shewn me, to refuse me your assistance in the most important affair of my life.

If you only ask me my advice, I shall readily give it; but if what you just now said be true, it will give you but little satisfaction.

CAN you doubt, Madam, of my sincerity?

FOR your own sake I wou'd; the truer your sentiments are, the more unfortunate they will make you, for, in short, *Meilcour*, you must be sensible it is not in my power to answer them. Your extreme youth, which numberless other women wou'd only esteem an additional charm, must be an eternal reason with me, though you had inspir'd me with the greatest tenderness, never to indulge my inclination. Either you wou'd love me too little or too much; both extremes wou'd be equally fatal to me. In the first of these situations I shou'd be expos'd to your humours and caprices, to your haughtinesses and infidelities, to all the torments, in fine, unfortunate love trains along with it; in the other, entirely abandon'd to the transports of your ardor, without conduct, without discretion, your very love wou'd be the cause of my ruin. A passion is always a misfortune to a woman, but in me it wou'd be a folly I shou'd never forgive myself.

Do you imagine, Madam, I shall not take all the care——

I UN-

I UNDERSTAND you, interrupted ſhe, I know you are going to promiſe me all poſſible circumſpection; nay, I am certain, that this moment, you think yourſelf capable of it, but the leſs you are accuſtom'd to love, the leſs your manner of loving wou'd be ſuitable and convenient; never wou'd you be able to conſtrain either your looks or your words, or, which wou'd be as bad, by a constraint too far push'd, and never manag'd with art, you wou'd betray what you had reſolv'd keeping ſecret in your breaſt. The beſt advice then, *Meilcour*, that I can give you, is to entreat you will think no more of me. It grieves me to conſider you muſt hate me, but I flatter myſelf your hatred will not be of a long continuance; you will thank me one day for my ſincerity. Why wou'd you leave me, my friend? continued ſhe, holding out her hand to me.

ALAS! Madam, you have drove me to deſpair; no man ever lov'd ſo paſſionately as I do; there is nothing I wou'd not undergo to have the happineſs of pleaſing you, no trial I wou'd not ſubmit to: you foreſee ſo many unlucky circumſtances, only be-
 cauſe you love me not.

No, no, Sir, neither will I allow you to think that; nay, I tell you more, for you ſhall always find me ſincere, were you leſs young, and I leſs reaſonable, I feel I cou'd love you with all my ſoul. Queſtion me no further, I beſeech you. In
 my

my present state of tranquillity I scarcely know my own heart; time alone can make me resolve, and after all perhaps I shall resolve on nothing.

In concluding these words, Madam *Lursay* rose hastily, and joining the company, took from me all hopes of renewing the conversation. So little did I know of the world, I imagined I had really made her angry. I was ignorant that women seldom care to continue long in amorous conversation with the person they have a mind to engage, and that they who are most desirous to surrender, make at first the greatest shew of virtue. Nothing cou'd be more gentle than her resistance; yet I thought I shou'd never be able to conquer her. I heartily repented the declarations I had made, and was angry with her for having led me into them, for a moment I hated her, I even resolv'd never to mention more to her the name of love, and to behave with so much indifference, that she shou'd have no room to suspect I had the least spark remaining.

WHILST I was ruminating on these disagreeable ideas, Madam *Lursay* felicitated herself on having so well dissembled the greatness of her satisfaction: joy sparkled from her eyes; to one more knowing, every thing would have made it visible how much he was belov'd; but her smiles, all the tender looks she gave me, I consider'd as so many fresh insults, and serv'd only to confirm me more strongly in my last resolution.

I STILL

I STILL remained in the fame place ; ſhe ſoon return'd, and prefs'd me to talk on different ſubjects. The melancholy air with which I answer'd her, the care I took to avoid meeting her eyes, were further convincing proofs I had not deceived her ; but, whatever her thoughts were, ſhe reſolv'd to eſtabliſh her empire firſt, and torment my heart ſufficiently before ſhe made it happy.

THE whole evening paſs'd on her ſide with the ſame attentions towards me : ſhe ſeem'd to have forgot what I had ſaid ; and the free, unconcerned air ſhe affected, plung'd me into ſtill greater anxieties. She even rallied me, at parting, on my melancholy, and tho' ſhe did it without the leaſt bitterness, I was ſeriouſly offended.

THE beginning of this adventure was as pleaſing to Madam *Lurſay* as it was painful to me. By fixing on a man of my age, ſhe made her own liable to reflection : but, to be ſure, one additional folly was no great matter to her ; beſides, it was no trifſe to have gained a lover who had never belonged to any woman before. Madam *Lurſay* was not, as yet, what may be call'd old, but ſhe felt old age approaching her. A woman in theſe circumſtances ſhou'd never deſpiſe any conqueſt. And, in truth, what can be more flattering than the tendereſs of a young man, whoſe tranſports reſtore her to her firſt pleaſures, who juſtifies the value ſhe ſtill ſets on her charms, who believes the

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perſon

person accepting his vows, the only one who wou'd not reject them with disdain; who adds gratitude to passion, trembles at the least caprice, is blind to all blemish of figure and character, either because he is depriv'd of the benefit of comparison, or that self-love wou'd suffer in esteeming the conquest less? With a man of experience, a woman, let her be what she will, finds always fewer resources; he has more desire than passion, more coquetry than sentiment, more art than nature, too much knowledge of the world to be credulous, too many opportunities for dissipation and inconstancy, ever to be singularly and ardently attach'd: in a word, he makes love more according to form, but there is not that sweet eagerness, that constant pressing attention in the course of his wooing.

WHATEVER faults Madam *Lursay* had found with a young man's method of loving, she was far from being so much alarm'd as she pretended. Had the inconveniencies she apprehended been real, she wou'd not have lov'd me less; more subtilty on my side to have made her dread a change, wou'd, I am positive, have made her quickly given up her excessive deference to decorum, to the danger of losing me; not that she intended, at least I had room to think so, to put off for any time the avowal of her weakness; eight days were the more sufficient to satisfy her virtue on that article, that she was persuaded my want of experience wou'd hinder me from ever presuming to take advantage of her favours until she thought

thought proper. The love ſhe had for me made her ingenious; ſhe was loth, if it were poſſible to prevent it, that my paſſion for her ſhou'd be but the buſineſs of a few days; leſs lov'd, I ſhou'd have met with leſs reſiſtance. Her heart was then full of tenderneſs and delicacy: by what I afterwards learned, it had not been always ſo; and tho' her love for me had not been the moſt ſincere, I am not ſurpriz'd ſhe had chang'd her ſyſtem.

A WOMAN, when ſhe is young, is more ſenſible to the pleaſure of inſpiring, than being herſelf ſuſceptible of, a paſſion. What ſhe calls tenderneſs is often no more than a haſty liking, which determines her quicker than love itſelf, amuſes her for a time, and extinguishes without her feeling or regretting it. The merit requiſite to attach a lover for ever, is not equal, in her eyes, to that by which ſhe enſlaves thouſands. Rather in ſuſpence than fixed, entirely guided by caprice, ſhe thinks leſs of the object that poſſeſſes, than of the one ſhe is deſirous ſhou'd poſſeſs her. She is ever in expectation of pleaſure, but never grants any. She endures a lover not ſo much becauſe he is, as becauſe ſhe proves herſelf to be, amiable. The diſcarded lover is often as little known as his ſucceſſor: cou'd ſhe have prevail'd on herſelf to bear with him ſome time longer, perhaps ſhe had brought her heart to love; but is ſhe to blame if ſhe be unfaithful? A handſome woman depends much leſs on herſelf than circumſtances, which unfortunately are ſo frequent, ſo unforeſeen, ſo preſſing, that it is no wonder, if, after ſeveral adventures, ſhe

has not arriv'd to the knowledge either of love or her own heart.

HAS she attain'd to the age when her charms begin to decrease, when the indifference of men forebodes the time is drawing near, in which she is no longer to be look'd upon, but with coldness and disgust? All her thoughts are instantly employ'd to prevent the approaching desertion. Certain once that in changing lovers she only chang'd pleasures, she now thinks herself happy in preserving the only one who remains faithful; the dismal prospect of all she has lost endears him to her. Constancy becomes necessary, and, by degrees, she accustoms her heart to sentiment. Forced in decency to avoid every thing that us'd to help to dissipate and corrupt her, she finds that to escape falling into dejection, she must resign herself absolutely to love, which, in her former life, never more than a momentary occupation, confounded with numberless incidents, is now her only resource. To love then she abandons herself with eagerness or rather fury; and what is commonly believ'd a woman's last fancy, is often no more than her first passion.

SUCH were the dispositions of Madam *Lursay*, when she undertook the conquest of my heart. Since her widow-hood and reform, the publick, who never speak the less for not being rightly instructed, had given her several lovers whom perhaps she had not admitted. Her pride was flatter'd

to

to behold me in her chains ; befides, ſhe thought it was but reaſonable, ſince her wiſdom and good conduct did not protect her, ſhe ſhou'd make herſelf amends in pleaſure for the bad opinion the world had of her.

THE tranſactions of the day furniſh'd me with reflections for the night, which was ſpent entirely, ſometimes in contriving means to make *Madam Luſſay* leſs inſenſible, ſometimes in encouraging myſelf to think no more of her. Her thoughts, no doubt, were more agreeably taken up : She was ſure, when next ſhe ſaw me, to find me tender, ſubmiſſive, eager to pleaſe, and ſollicitous to overcome her cruelties, and natural it was ſhe ſhou'd expect all this, but ſhe had to deal with one who was quite ignorant of the ways of the world.

HOWEVER, I went the next day to her houſe, but late, and at the hour when I knew ſhe wou'd either be abroad, or have much company at home. By the cold angry manner in which ſhe received me, I might have plainly perceived ſhe expected me earlier, but far from thinking that to be her reaſon, I attributed every thing to her indifference.

AT ſight of her I had chang'd colour ; but, ſtill determin'd to conceal from her what I felt, I recover'd without much difficulty, and aſſum'd an air leſs diſcompoſed : I had even command enough

over myself to address her without that confusion which generally seizes us near the person we love; but whatever coldness I endeavoured to affect, she was not long deceived; to clear up her doubts, she had only to look earnestly at me. I cou'd not withstand her eyes; one glance from them laid open my whole heart. She propos'd to me to play, and while the cards were getting ready: you are, said she smiling, a singular sort of a lover, if you are willing I should judge of your love by your assiduity, you certainly have no mind I shou'd entertain a very high opinion of it. The dearest of all my wishes, Madam, replied I, is, that you wou'd believe I love you; and I think it is giving you no small proof of it, to present myself before you as late as I possibly cou'd.

AN extraordinary piece of policy indeed, Sir, replied she; but if you are sometimes deficient in point of judgment, I must own your imagination makes amends. But what is the matter with you? Why all that coldness in your looks? Do you know that your silence terrifies me? But, apropos, do you still continue to love me much? I believe not. My poor *Meilcour*! Do not, however, abandon me: you wou'd throw me into despair. By your manner of looking, I imagine you don't believe me: after all, methinks we ought to be on pretty good terms.

HAVE you not said enough, Madam? how can you find in your heart to add such cruel expressions

ons to the indifference with which you receive my vows? Yes, answer'd she, looking at me with all the tenderness imaginable, yes, *Meilcour*, you have reason to complain, I do not use you well; but shou'd you be displeas'd at the last effort of expiring haughtiness? Do you not perceive what it costs me to exert it? Ah! were I to obey the dictates of my heart, how many assurances shou'd I not give you of my love! How sorry am I, I did not know sooner you wish'd to be prevented! at the hazard of all that cou'd have happen'd, you shou'd not have spoke first, you shou'd only have answer'd me.

I HAVE since been sensible of all Madam *Lursay's* artifice, and the pleasure she took in my ignorance: so far was I from comprehending these discourses, and this avowal of her real sentiments, which with another wou'd have been of the most dangerous consequence to her, that they threw me into the most cruel perplexity. I made her no answer; and perswaded it was all bitter raillery, I determin'd the more to free myself from so imperious a mistress. Upon my word, continued she, observing my dejected countenance; if you refuse much longer to believe me, I am not certain but I shall give you a rendezvous for to-morrow; wou'd not that embarrass you greatly? I beseech you, Madam, in your own name to spare me: the condition you reduce me to, is terrible ——— What then, interrupted she, I am no longer allow'd to tell you

I love you : you deprive me however of a very sensible pleasure.

I THOUGHT myself happy, that the company, then joining us, put a stop to this conversation. We sat down to play.

As long as the party lasted, Madam *Lursay*, no doubt, more touched than she imagin'd, hurried away by love, never ceas'd giving me the strongest proofs of it. All her prudence seem'd to have abandon'd her at once ; she seem'd as if she had no pleasure left but that of loving, and assuring me she lov'd me. She was sensible how necessary encouragement was in order to fix me ; but all was thrown away upon me ; and as yet she cou'd not prevail on herself to own seriously that her inclinations corresponded with mine. Dubious in the very steps she took, there was a constant mixture of tenderness and severity in every action. She seem'd to yield but with a view of making a more obstinate resistance ; when by any favourable words she let drop, she imagin'd me dispos'd to hopes, attentive to take them from me again, she instantly resum'd that air which had so often made me tremble, and by these means depriv'd me even of the sad resource of uncertainty.

THE whole evening was spent in these practices ; her last caprice happening not to be favourable to me, I return'd home, persuaded I was hated, and determined to look out for a new engagement. I
employ'd

employ'd the greateft part of the fubfequent night in confidering which of all the women of my acquaintance was moft worthy my attachment, but all to no purpofe, after the exa<teft scrutiny, not one pleas'd me fo well as Madam *Lurfay*. The little knowledge I had of love, made me conclude it's empire over me abfolute ; I imagin'd it was a thing impoffible for me ever to change, and that I was deftin'd to the cruel torment of loving without a return. By dint of perfuading myfelf I was more enamour'd than any man in the world, I had work'd myfelf up to all the violent emotions of paffion as ftrongly, as if in reality I felt them. All the refolutions I had form'd of never feeing Madam *Lurfay* more, vanifh'd ; and gave place to the moft ardent defire of pleafing her. What reafon have I to complain, faid I to myfelf ? Have I a right to be furpriz'd at her feverities ? Did I expect to find myfelf belov'd ? Is it not to the greateft care and affiduity that I am to owe that bleffing ? How happy fhall I be, if, one day, I can render her lefs infenfible ! Can fuch a heart as hers be purchas'd at too dear a rate ? I concluded with this idea, it return'd with the morning, and feem'd magnified by the illufions of the night.

I WENT to Madam *Lurfay*'s as early as I cou'd after dinner, determin'd to fwear to her, an eternal adoration, and to fubmit to whatever fate fhe fhou'd think proper to decree me. Unfortunately for her, fhe was not at home, which made me very miferable : not knowing what to do with myfelf

till the opera shou'd begin, I paid some visits, where I carried all the heaviness I was oppress'd with.

I WAS so out of humour in coming to the opera, where there was but little company, that, to avoid being interrupted in my melancholy thoughts, I had a lattice open'd for me, which I prefer'd to the boxes, where I shou'd have been more liable to be disturb'd: I waited, without desire or impatience, for the opera to begin. Entirely wrapt up in Madam *Lursay*, I cou'd think of nothing but the disagreeableness of her absence, when the lattice next to mine open'd. Curious to see the persons that were to fill it, I look'd in, the object that presented itself fix'd all my attention. Imagine every thing most noble in the exactest beauty, all that grace and charms can have most enchanting, in a word, the greatest bloom, and lustre youth can bestow, 'twill scarcely be sufficient to form a right Idea of the person I wou'd fain describe. At sight of her I was seiz'd with I know not what extraordinary and sudden emotion: struck with so much beauty, I remain'd as it were annihilated. My admiration was carried into transport: I felt a disorder rising in my soul, that spread itself through all my senses; far from abating, it redoubled by the private examination I made of her charms. Her dress was plain but noble. She indeed wanted no ornament; was there any so brilliant she wou'd not have set off? her countenance was sweet and reserv'd: wit and sentiment seem'd to sparkle from her eyes. The lady appear'd to me to be very young;

young; and, by the furprize of the fpectators, I imagin'd it was the firft time of her appearing in publick: that thought gave me an involuntary emotion of joy, and I heartily wifh'd myfelf the only acquaintance ſhe had in the world. Two ladies, elegantly drefs'd, accompanied her, new matter of furprize, I knew them not; but that gave me little concern. Intent only on my fair unknown, I never ceas'd gazing on her, but when ſhe happen'd to caft her eyes on any one; mine immediately follow'd her's to the object ſhe ſeem'd deſirous to ſeek, if ſhe fix'd them there for ever ſo little a time, and that the object chanc'd to be a young man, I concluded, nothing but a lover cou'd make her ſo attentive. Inſenſible of the motives from which I was acting, I conducted, I interrupted her looks; I pried into her minuteſt turns. So much obſtinacy not to loſe ſight of her, made her at laſt take notice of me; ſhe view'd me in her turn: I fix'd her attention without knowing it; in the enchantment that hurried me on in ſpite of me, I know not what my eyes told her, but ſhe turn'd hers aſide, bluſhing a little. In the miſt of all my tranſports I dreaded appearing too forward; without thinking I had yet form'd any deſign of pleaſing her, I choſe rather to conſtrain myſelf than give her a bad opinion of me. I had been a full hour in admiration of her, when a friend of mine came into my lattice. The thoughts I was taken up with, were already become ſo dear, that, with grief, I ſaw they were going to be interrupted; and I doubt whether I ſhou'd have ſaid a word to my friend, had not my
fair

fair unknown been the subject of the conversation. He knew no more than I who she was : we made several conjectures, but none to our satisfaction. My friend was one of those giddy-pates of the first class, always insolently familiar ; he spoke so loud in praise of the unknown's charms, look'd at her with so much assurance and affectation, that I blush'd both for him and me, without knowing well what my sentiments were, without imagining I lov'd, I was unwilling to displease ; the dislike the unknown might take to this young man's behaviour, I fear'd might likewise prejudice me in her mind ; and that, seeing us so intimate, she wou'd think me as odd and ridiculous as he was. I had already conceiv'd such an esteem for her, that the very thoughts of her having the same bad opinion of us both, gave me great uneasiness, I endeavour'd then all I could to turn the conversation to some subject wherein she shou'd not be concern'd. Naturally I was of a merry humorous disposition, and could handle agreeably enough those trifling topicks which make some men shine in the world. The great desire I had, my unknown shou'd lose nothing that cou'd make me appear to advantage, made me more elegant in my expressions, but what I said was not perhaps the more sensible. However, I observ'd she was more attentive to what I was saying than to the opera ; I even sometimes saw her smile.

THE last act was almost over, when the Marquis of *Germueil*, a young man, extremely amiable in his figure, and greatly esteemed, came in-

to my unknown's lattice. We were intimately acquainted; but at fight of him, I felt, I know not what disturbance rifing in my foul. The unknown receiv'd him with that eafy politeneſs which proceeds from friendship, and a willingness to give marks of eſteem. We bow'd to each other without ſaying a word; how ſtrongly ſoever I wiſh'd to know who this unknown was, who had already gain'd ſuch an empire over my heart, perſuaded too that *Germeuil* cou'd ſatisfy my curioſity, I choſe rather to ſtifle a deſire ſo very tormenting, than lay myſelf open to a man, who had already fill'd me with jealouſy. My unknown directed her diſcourſe to him; and tho' the opera, was the ſubject of their converſation, they ſeem'd to me to deliver themſelves with mutual tenderneſs: I even thought I diſcover'd certain glances which made me miſerable. She appear'd ſo deſerving of love, that I cou'd not imagine *Germeuil*, or any man in the world, cou'd ſee her, and be indifferent; he too ſeem'd to me ſo much to be dreaded, that I cou'd not flatter myſelf, he had paid his addreſſes in vain.

THE little notice ſhe took of me, after *Germeuil* came in, confirm'd me in the opinion that they mutually lov'd one another; unable to bear ſo tormenting a thought, I withdrew haſtily. In ſpite of my reſentment, I cou'd not go far; a deſire of ſeeing her once more, and the hopes of diſcovering by my own means, who ſhe was, detain'd me on the ſtairs. A moment after ſhe paſs'd by, *Germeuil* handing her down. I follow'd: a coach without arms

arms came up; *Germeuil* went in with her: her servants were out of livery; and nothing in the whole equipage gave me the least information of what I so much wish'd to know. In fortune alone, were all my expectations of ever having the happiness of seeing her again. One circumstance help'd to comfort me in my distress, it was impossible, I thought, so perfect a beauty, shou'd remain long conceal'd. Certain, I might have freed myself of all my uneasiness by seeing *Germeuil* the next day; but what reason, what motives cou'd I alledge for so much curiosity? In spite of all my disguise, was I not to fear he would discover its source? And, were it true, as I suspected it was, that he lov'd the unknown, how ridiculous wou'd it have been in me to precaution him against myself? With a mind full of the utmost anxiety, I return'd home, the more persuaded I was desperately in love, that my passion ow'd it's rise to one of those surprizing events, which characterise the most remarkable adventures in Romances.

FAR from combating it on that account, so extraordinary a commencement urg'd me still more to grant it all manner of indulgence.

IN the midst of this disorder, which I took delight in encreasing; Madam *Lursay* return'd to my mind, but disagreeably, and like one whose very remembrance gives uneasiness. Not that I had ceas'd thinking she had charms, no, but I thought them vastly inferior to those of my unknown; I now resolv'd,

folv'd, more firmly than ever, never more to fpeak to her of love, and to abandon myfelf entirely to the pleafing thoughts of my new inclination. How happy am I, faid I to myfelf, that Madam *Lurfay* did not love me! of how little confequence wou'd her affections be to me now? I muft have been falfe to her, expos'd to her moft fevere reproaches, and expected on all occafions to fee her difcountenance and oppofe my love to my unknown: but, on the other hand, refum'd I, have I any fhare in the affections of her, for whose fake I am going to be thus unfaithful? I know her not; perhaps I fhall never fee her again. *Germemil* is in love, and, fince I'm forc'd to acknowledge he is amiable, what muft not ſhe feel for him? is ſuch a man to be facrific'd to me? theſe reflections were inſenſibly ſtealing me back to Madam *Lurfay*: an affair in ſome advance, free acceſs to her, ſome remains of liking, and the hopes of ſpeedy ſucceſs, were pretty ſtrong reaſons not to deſert her entirely; but I found theſe reaſons all weak, when ſet in oppoſition to the violence of my new paſſion. I fear'd, when I came home, meeting Madam *Lurfay* with my mother; I now dreaded her ſight as much as that very day I had wiſh'd for it. The joy I conceiv'd in not meeting her, was of no long continuance; ſhe arriv'd in a ſhort time after. Her preſence confounded me. Tho' much I was then prepoſſeſs'd againſt her, whatever reſolutions I had form'd of loving her no more, I found ſhe had ſtill a greater influence over my heart, than I imagin'd. The thoughts of my unknown, were more
pleaſing

pleasing and flattering ; I was sensible she was greatly superior in beauty : there was a difference in what they each inspired me with ; but still I was divided ; and had Madam *Lursay* thought proper at that time, she might have carried the victory. But I know not what had put her out of humour ; she receiv'd, with a most ridiculous haughtiness, a mighty plain compliment I made her. In my then disposition, she disgusted me more than she cou'd have done at any other time ; what was still worse, and undoubtedly, contrary to Madam *Lursay's* intentions, I appear'd quite unconcern'd. Her caprice continued the whole evening, and rather encreas'd, when she found me so very neglectful. We parted, both equally discontented. I neither saw her, nor look'd for her the next day : I was piqued at her behaviour the night before ; and her presence was become the less necessary, that I had sufficient cause of distraction from a more agreeable quarter. I spent the whole day in search of my unknown ; entertainments, publick walks, I look'd into every place, but cou'd no where find, either her, or *Germeuil*, whom I was determin'd at last to ask, who she was. I continued this vain pursuit for two days successively ; my ill fortune serv'd only to make her more present to my mind. My imagination was continually representing her to me, in all her charms, with an extasie I had not experienc'd before. I had no doubt, but that her birth wou'd be no discredit to mine ; to satisfy myself that this opinion was just, I appeal'd less to her beauty, than to a certain air of dignity and good breeding, which

which diftinguifh ladies of a certain rank, even in their oddities. But to be in love, and not to know the perfon I was in love with, of all torments, feem'd to me the moft infupportable. Befides, what hopes cou'd I have of meeting with a grateful return, if I did not find means of communicating my fentiments to the object of my wifhes? I faw no difficulty in waiting on her, and fpeaking to her, when I had been once admitted to her acquaintance. My rank, intitled me to admittance every where; and were my unknown fuch a perfonage as my addrefles cou'd do no honour to, I was at leaft fure they cou'd never difparage her. This thought made me audacious, and fortified me in my love: it had perhaps, been more prudent to have combated it, but to flatter it was much more pleafing.

It was now three days, fince I had feen Madam *Lurfay*; nor had I felt much pain in fupporting her abfence; not but that now and then I had a defire to fee her, but fuch a fleeting defire as died away, almoft as foon as conceiv'd. It proceeded no longer from an impulse of love, I was not mafter of. Since I had beheld my unknown, I cou'd fee her without pleafure, and leave her without regret. Still I had that fort of liking for her which goes by the name of love, which men have made to pafs for fuch, and that women have admitted on the fame terms. I fhould not have been difpleas'd to find her fufceptible; but I no longer wifh'd any return ſhe cou'd make me, ſhou'd be owing to a paſſion

passion in her, or requir'd one in me. Her conquest, in which I had so lately placed all my happiness, seem'd now unworthy of any particular attention. In fine, I shou'd gladly have enter'd into that easy commerce with her, which is carried on with a coquet, engaging enough to amuse for a few days, but that is as easily broke off, as agreed on.

BUT this was what I did not think I cou'd expect from Madam *Lursay*, who, a platonick in her reasonings, constantly maintain'd that love, when possess'd of an elevated soul, had nothing to do with the senses: that the irregularities persons touch'd with that passion, fell into every day, were less owing to its influence, than the corruption of their hearts: that love might be counted a weakness, but that in a vertuous soul, it never degenerated into vice. However, she allow'd, that the woman the most steady to these principles, might meet with some dangerous occurrences; but, that if she found herself necessitated to yield, it shou'd not be till after she had made so long and obstinate a resistance, as wou'd give her less reason to reproach herself, when she meditated on her defeat. Madam *Lursay* was perhaps in the right, but female platonicks are not conclusive, and I have observ'd that those women were always easiest overcome, who set out with a ridiculous expectation of never being seduc'd, either because they had as much real weakness as the rest of the sex, or that, less on their guard, they were not prepar'd to oppose the contending danger.

I WAS

I WAS too young to be fenfible of all the abfurdity of this fyftem, and to obferve how little it was attended to, even by thofe who fupported it with the greateft zeal; and confidering I did not know the difference between a vertuous woman, and a prude, 'tis not furprizing I expected no more condefcencion from Madam *Lurfay*, than ſhe pleas'd to own herfelf capable of.

THO' full of a new paſſion, or rather in love for the firſt time, ſtill I was attach'd to her by defire, and the little hopes I had of fucceeding with my unknown, prevented me from giving up all thoughts of Madam *Lurfay*, I ſtudied within myfelf how I ſhou'd gain the one, without loſing the other: the rigid vertue of the latter made me deſpair, and not imagining after much confideration, that I ſhou'd be ever able to bring her over to my purpoſes, I fix'd at laſt on the object that pleas'd me moſt.

IT was now three days, as I ſaid before, ſince I had ſeen Madam *Lurfay*, nor had I felt much uneaſineſs at her abſence. She on her ſide had every day expected me, but convinc'd at length, that I avoided her, ſhe began to fear loſing me, and reſolv'd with herſelf, to uſe me with more gentleneſs for the future. She had concluded from the few things I had ſaid, that I certainly lov'd her: but I had ceas'd giving any further demonſtrations of my paſſion; how was ſhe to behave in ſuch circumſtances? the moſt becoming party was to wait till love, who cannot bear to be long conſtrain'd, particularly

ticularly in a heart so new as mine was, shou'd again force me to break silence; but this was not the surest. It never came into their head, that I had abandon'd her: she only imagin'd that certain of never being lov'd, I was struggling with a passion that made me miserable. Tho' this disposition did not seem to her disadvantageous, still it might be dangerous to leave me too long in it. Amends might be offer'd me else-where, which resentment wou'd probably make me accept of. But the great difficulty was, how to communicate her love to me without injuring that decorum, to which she was so scrupulously attach'd. She had experienc'd that equivocal discourses, had no manner of effect upon me, and yet, she cou'd not prevail on herself, after the opinion she had made me conceive of her, to speak in such terms, as wou'd leave me no doubt.

UNCERTAIN how she shou'd behave, she came to Madam *Meilcour's*, I was not yet come home; but when, on my arrival, I was told she was with my mother, I was just on the point of going out again. On reflection, I consider'd such a proceeding, wou'd be too disobliging to Madam *Lursay*; besides, she might attribute my flight, and the dread of seeing her, to a sentiment I was no longer willing she shou'd suspect me of. She seem'd, in the midst of a large company, to meditate profoundly: without coldness or constraint, I paid her my respects, yet I carried in my looks an impression of grief, occasion'd by my having that day sought in vain for my unknown. I stood for a considerable
time

time near Madam *Lurfay*, without faying any thing to her, but on general topicks. She inquir'd where I had been, ask'd me with an air of indifference, a great number of questions, and as long as ſhe was in the circle, ſhew'd neither eagernels or deſire to converſe with me in particular. The importunate crowd diſpers'd at laſt; but ſtill conſtrain'd by the preſence of Madam de *Meilcour*, and ſome other perſons who remain'd in the room, and unable to reſiſt any longer, the deſire of a private converſation with me: a propos, Sir, ſaid ſhe, with a very ſerious air, I have ſomething to ſay to you; follow me. At theſe words, ſhe paſſ'd into another room.

THIS proceeding which, with any man but me, wou'd have appear'd irregular, concluded nothing between us; ſhe might have taken much more upon her, conſidering the intimate footing we were on, without expoſing herſelf to any injurious reflection. I follow'd her, greatly embarraſs'd about what ſhe cou'd have to ſay to me, but much more ſo about the answers I ſhou'd make. She look'd at me with ſeverity in her eyes. At length having fix'd my attention; you will think it extraordinary perhaps, Sir, that I ſhou'd require an explanation from you. From me Madam! Yes, Sir, from you. Your behaviour to me, for ſome days paſt, has not been the moſt becoming. In order to find you innocent, I have been ſo complaiſant as to ſuſpect myſelf of guilt; on the ſtricteſt examination I can diſcover none: you are to inform me, how I have
offended,

offended, in what I am to blame? Justify yourself if possible, and tell me why of late, you shew me so little regard. You surprize me, Madam; I never imagin'd I had been neglectful of my duty towards you; and never shou'd I forgive myself, cou'd I think I had given you the least room to upbraid me with having fail'd in the respect I have always had, or the friendship you have allow'd me to profess for you. Those are pompous terms, replied she, and, if I wanted nothing but words, there are enough to satisfy me; but you are not sincere, within these four days you are more chang'd, with regard to me, than you think proper to confess. You certainly do better to disown your proceedings, than attempt their justification; however, I insist upon your answering me directly. Is it out of caprice, that you renounce my friendship? Do you think you have any just cause of complaint against me? You see I make no wrong use of the distance age has put between us; young as you are, I foolishly believ'd you had some solidity, and I treat with you less, as I shou'd with a young man, than as with a friend on whom I can depend, and whom I have a mind to preserve. I wish you may be sensible of all the merits of this confidence. Teach me, in fine, the manner in which I am to conduct myself towards you, and of all things, tell me why you shun me for some time past, and why, when we meet, you seem to see me with regret? how, Madam, replied I, wou'd you have me acknowledge crimes, I by no means find myself guilty of? If I have seem'd
to

to fhun you, you cannot but be fenfible of the reafon. If, when I met you, I dared not to fpeak to you in the fame manner in which I had before addrefs'd you, it was becaufe I imagin'd you did not liften to me with pleafure. Undoubtedly I did not, replied ſhe, but at the fame time you forbore this new manner of addrefs, which you fee did not pleafe, why had you not recourfe to your former one, which you always found me ready and willing to anfwer? You made me angry, tis true, but I was more fo on your account, than my own, when I faw you in a way of faying things that muft be difpleafing. I think I even bore you ſome malice.——I now plainly fee Madam, interrupted I, by what means I have drawn down your anger upon me; but cou'd I imagine you wou'd ever have made fo ſerious a crime of what I ſaid? It cannot be new to you, to be thought handſome: I believe I am not the firft on whom you have made a deep impreffion; and I had the better right to forgiveness, that you muft have been accuſtom'd to hear the ſame thing from others.

SIR, replied ſhe, it is not of what you have ſaid, that I complain: it was enough for me, that I anfwer'd you, as in all reafon I ſhou'd; and you might have obſerv'd, I ſince laugh'd with you at what had paſs'd. 'Twas of very little conſequence you ſhou'd tell me you lov'd me; the danger for my heart, was not fo preffing, as to oblige me on that occaſion to arm with all my ſeverity. It is poſſible, that without any fix'd intention to pleaſe me,

me, even without my being agreeable to you ; you had a mind to make me believe you lov'd me. A woman is often told so, because without that resource, a man wou'd sometimes not know what to say to her, he has the pleasure of sounding her heart, thinks he flatters her vanity, or has a mind to accustom himself to that sort of language, in order to try how far, and in what manner, he can best prevail. In this you only follow'd the custom, a ridiculous one if you will, but a custom in short, that is establish'd. 'Twas not then, from what you said, that I found reason to complain. Had you really lov'd me, you wou'd not have appear'd more culpable ; but why, ever since that conversation, is your behaviour so absolutely chang'd ? Had you a right, because you said you lov'd me, to expect that I shou'd love you ? Or do you imagine, let my passion for you have been ever so violent, that my heart, ardent to give itself up to the caprice of your's, shou'd, from the first moment, have paid you back all your transports ? Cou'd you suppose me capable of embarking so blindly in an affair of such prodigious consequence ? No : you had spoke, and I must surrender. Too happy, that your sighs shou'd be directed to me, you imagin'd that, burning with impatience to be overcome, I only waited the avowal of your passion, to declare my own. And on what grounds, have you flatter'd yourself with so easy a conquest ? what action of mine has authoriz'd such a presumption ? 'Tis demonstrable you never lov'd me. You wou'd have esteem'd me more. Never wou'd you have thought me capable
of

of a shameful caprice; had it been true, that love directed your steps, you wou'd not have avoided my fight: how unfortunate foever I had made you, you wou'd have found my prefence neceffary; never wou'd you have had the power of refolving on an abfence, I did not prefcribe. At length you are return'd; but fcarcely do you vouchfate to look at me. Ah, *Meilcour*! is it thus a heart is to be attack'd? is this the way to make yourfelf belov'd? you have, you will tell me, too little experience, to conduct yourfelf properly, in a fentiment fo new to your foul: that ftill wou'd be but a bad excufe. Is love then fo eafily to be controul'd? believe me, we are actuated by it, in fpite of our wills, love compels us, and we have no manner of direction over love. Faults, I'll allow, are fometimes committed, but fuch faults only, as proceed from too much eagerness, and which often ferve the better to perfuade. Had I been dear to you, thefe are the faults you wou'd have committed, and I fhould not this day have fo much reason to complain of the little regard you have left for me.

THUS then, Madam, faid I, I am made fenfible at laft of the wrongs I have done. Indeed, you are very unjuft; after uſing me in the manner you have done, does it belong to you to complain?

WELL then, replied ſhe, in a fofter accent, let us ſee which of us is moſt in the wrong; all I deſire is an explanation: I even conſent to forgive you; from this moment I forget you ever told me you lov'd me.-----

C

Ah!

AH! Madam, cried I, quite beside myself, how cruel you are in your very forgiveness! you intend me mercy, and you make me the most miserable of men! you'll forget, you say, I love you; make me then forget it too. Oh! that you were but sensible, continued I, throwing myself at her feet, of the melancholy condition to which you have reduc'd my heart-----Heavens! cried she, retiring; at my feet! rise quickly: what wou'd you have people think, were you to be surpriz'd in that posture? That I am swearing to you, all the love and respect you so deservedly inspire. And do you think, said she, obliging me to rise, you can convince me best in that situation? such are then the effects of all the circumspection you promis'd me; but after all, what is it you have to ask of me? That you will believe I love you; that you will give me leave to repeat it to you, and to hope that one day I may find you less insensible. Must I then believe you love me, and most ardently wish a return? I can only repeat, what I have already told you. My heart, as yet, is in a state of tranquillity, and I tremble to think of seeing its peace disturb'd: nevertheless-----but no, I have nothing more to say to you: I even forbid you to conjecture.

WITH this conclusion, Madam *Lursay* withdrew from me. In going away she gave me a look expressive of the greatest tenderness. Satisfied she had done enough for decorum, no doubt she now resolv'd doing every thing for love. Nothing cou'd be clearer than what she had said to me; nay, she had

had treated me like one from whose penetration there was nothing to be expected. However, tho' little my ignorance allow'd me to conjecture, I plainly faw ſhe was not ſo far from correſponding to my wiſhes, as the firſt time I had ſpoke to her; but ſtill ſhe had not explain'd herſelf ſo clearly, as to leave me no doubt: and beſides, I did not now love her enough, to meditate attentively on the flattering concluſion of her diſcourſe.

THE warmth of her expreſſions, occaſion'd by her violence, and a ſituation new to me, had ſurpris'd, but not mov'd me.

I HAVE no doubt but Madam *Lurſay*, had ſhe known any thing of the new flame kindled in my breaſt, wou'd have ſtill been leſs reſerv'd, and, by that means, have quite ſeduc'd me. Stopt at firſt, by the thoughts of a pleaſure I was an abſolute ſtranger to, I ſhou'd for that very reaſon, have yielded without further conſideration. Every thing ſeems a paſſion to him who never experienc'd one. That which ſeem'd to alienate me from Madam *Lurſay*, was not deeply enough rooted, to have been able to withſtand her attacks; and no doubt, I ſhou'd have prefer'd an eaſy, uninterrupted amuſement, to the anxious care of inſpiring love, where, at leaſt in the beginning, I ſhou'd be ſure to meet with nothing but trouble and vexation. So far was Madam *Lurſay* from thinking it neceſſary to appear as much enamour'd as ſhe really was, that her fears about me were no ſooner re-

mov'd, than she began again, with a very little difference, on her old system. She was willing to allow me to think, that I shou'd one day be victorious, but not that I had yet gain'd the victory.

I RETURN'D with her into the saloon, not much in love, but imagining myself greatly so. This first emotion subsiding, my timidity seiz'd me anew; I knew not how to behave; tho' plainly she had declar'd herself, still I saw nothing in her discourse, that cou'd assure me of a conquest over her. Austerity had seated itself in her looks; and tho' this outward severity was intended more for the rest of the company than for me, it drove me back to all my fears. I dared neither to approach, or look at her. So much backwardness on my side, did not answer the plan she had laid down: she encourag'd me, in the most obliging terms, to place a greater confidence in her; she even gave me to understand several times, that two persons who love each other, have great difficulty to express what they feel, in the midst of the tumult of a large company. This was as much as to tell me, I ought to petition for a rendezvous. She waited a considerable time to see if I had taken the hint; but finding at length I had no thoughts of the kind, she very generously took the whole affair upon herself.

HAVE you any business to do to-morrow, said she in a careless manner? I don't recollect any, answered I. Shall I see you then, replied she? I don't propose going abroad, and intend seeing but little company:

company: come and amuse me in my solitude; besides, I have some things to say to you. I understand, Madam, answered I, you intend to compleat the scolding you have begun.

ONE cannot always remember, what one shou'd in your company, I shall be more afraid of being too indulgent: will you come? I promis'd her I wou'd. Handing her to her coach, I imagin'd I felt her squeeze my hand. Ignorant of the consequences, that might attend such an action with Madam *Lursay*, I return'd the squeeze; she thank'd me, by redoubling hers in the most agreeable manner: not to be behind-hand in politeness, I continued the sport she had begun. She parted from me with a sigh, and fully perswaded we were beginning to understand one another, tho' in reality, she alone had a meaning.

I HAD scarcely left her, when the rendezvous, to which I was not very attentive at first, came into my head. A rendezvous, notwithstanding my want of experience, appear'd to me a very weighty affair. She was to have but little company; in such a case, 'twas fairly owning she was to have none at all. She had squeez'd my hand: I knew not all the meaning of that action; but it seem'd to me a mark of friendship from one sex to the other, that signified something particular, and only to be accounted for in certain situations. But the vertuous Madam *Lursay*, who a moment before had forbid me

even to conjecture, was she now willing?——no
——that was impossible.

LET what wou'd be the consequence, I determin'd to go to the rendezvous. 'Twas not in nature, I thought, but I must be satisfied with it; and Madam *Lursay* was handsome enough to make me impatient for the hour, of its coming.

IN the midst of all these pleasing Ideas: ah! wou'd it were my unknown, cried I, that had granted me this rendezvous! But no, thought I again, she's too sensible, she's too discreet, to shew such favour to any man——unless indeed, it be to *Germueil*. But what is become of them both? what can be the reason that, ever since I have been in search of them, they have both escap'd me? ought not I to renounce a pursuit, which this very day, has been so unsuccessful? why shou'd I, just on the point of being made happy, entertain thoughts, which can only make me miserable, of an object I saw but for a moment, and whom, undoubtedly, I shall not see again, but in the possession of another? No matter,——I must, I will discover, who this unknown is, in order to be cur'd of a passion, already too powerful in my breast: I'll question *Germueil*; and if I find he is belov'd, I will think less of disturbing his pleasures, than quietly enjoying my own. The conversation I had just had with Madam *Lursay*, made me reflect with an unusual indifference on my unknown. The rendezvous was continually uppermost in my thoughts. I had always envied those that were happy

py enough to obtain themſelves one; I imagin'd it ſo clever, for a man of my age, to be thought worthy, and that too, by ſuch a perſon as Madam *Lurfay*, that the novelty, and the ideas I conceiv'd, were very near ſupplying the place of a moſt ardent affection.

HOWEVER, I determin'd to go the next morning, to *Germeuil's*, and fell aſleep, offering up my deſires to Madam *Lurfay*, and I know not what more delicate ſentiment to my unknown.

MY waking thought was to go to *Germeuil's*: I ſtudied what I was to ſay, and prepar'd as much to deceive him, as if, by a queſtion ſo plain as the one I had to aſk him, he were inevitably to diſcover the inward trouble of my ſoul. I thought I ſhou'd never be able to diſguiſe myſelf ſufficiently, and, prepoſſeſs'd with a ſilly notion, common to moſt young people, I imagin'd, that by only looking at me, the perſons the moſt indifferent about my ſituation, wou'd read into my heart: with much more reaſon, I miſtruſted *Germeuil*, whom I believ'd at leaſt as much in love, as I was. I hurried away to his houſe, but how greatly was I concern'd, to find he had been in the country for ſome days paſt! My imagination, already hurt, was quite offended at this departure; it repreſented things to me in the moſt cruel light. Within theſe few days, they had both diſappear'd; I doubted not an inſtant but they were together. My love and jealouſy both reviv'd. I judg'd the immenſity of his

happiness from the greatness of my misfortune ; and fully persuaded she lov'd him, I found myself the less dispos'd to look out for a cure.

It was then the spring of the year ; leaving *Germeuil's*, I went to the *Thuilleries*. On the way, I recollected *Madam Lursay's* rendezvous, but besides, that it did not now appear as charming as the night before, I found not tranquillity enough in my mind, to go through with it properly. The image of my unknown was alone strongly imprinted in my soul : I call'd her perfidious, as if she had really given me a right over her heart, which she had violated : I figh'd with love and fury : There was no project ever so extravagant that I did not form to take her from *Germeuil* ; never, in fine, had I felt such violent agitations.

Tho' I had no reason to fear, whatever part I had walk'd in, meeting much company at the hour I went to the *Thuilleries*, yet the situation of my mind was such, that I chose those alleys which I knew to be at all times least frequented. I mov'd towards the labyrinth, and there abandon'd myself to grief and jealousy. The voices of two women, I heard just by me, suspended, for a moment, my profound reveries : so entirely was I taken up with my own thoughts, I had little or no curiosity about any thing else. Tho' oppressive my melancholy, it was dear to me, and I dreaded every thing that cou'd divert it. I was going to indulge it in some other place, when an exclamation from one of the
women

women, made me return. The palifade between us obftructed my fight, but this obftacle made me refolve to fee who they were. I laid afide the horn-beam as gently as I cou'd ; what cou'd equal my joy and furprize, when I beheld my unknown.

AN emotion, more violent ftill, than that I had felt the firft time I faw her, seiz'd my fenfes. My grief, at firft fufpended at fight of fo charming a creature, at length gave way to the extreme delight I felt in feeing her once more. I forgot in that moment, the moft precious of my life, that I had ever believ'd ſhe lov'd another ; I forgot myfelf. Transported, confounded, a thouſand times I refolv'd throwing myfelf at her feet, and ſwearing to her an eternal adoration. This impetuous movement ſubſided, but did not extinguish. She ſpoke pretty loud ; the ſatisfaction I ſhou'd have in diſcovering ſome of her ſentiments in a converſation, ſhe might reaſonably imagine, no body was a witneſs to, gave eaſe to my mind ; I refolv'd hiding myfelf, and making as little noiſe as poſſible. One of the ladies I had ſeen with her at the opera, was with her. Tho' the joy I felt in being ſo near the object of all my wiſhes was inexpressible, yet I was forely vex'd to find myſelf depriv'd of the pleaſure of converſing with her. Her face was not directly oppoſite to mine, but I diſcover'd ſo much of it, as not to loſe fight of all her charms. Her ſituation was ſuch, ſhe cou'd not diſcover me, this made me ſome amends for what I loſt.

I DO confess, said the unknown, I am not insensible to the pleasure of being thought, nor do I hate to be told, I am handsome; but this pleasure, has fewer charms for me, than you imagine: I think it as frivolous, as in reality it is; and, if you knew me better, you wou'd not think me in much danger from it. I did not pretend to say, replied the lady, there was much to be fear'd for you; but that we shou'd give way to that pleasure as little as possible. I am quite of another way of thinking, said the unknown: we shou'd begin by granting it all manner of indulgence, we are the surer of being disgusted afterwards.

THERE you talk like a coquet, resum'd the lady, yet I am certain you are not one. And if there be any thing to be dreaded for you, in the course of your life, it is your being too susceptible, and too tenderly attach'd. How that will be, I know not, said the unknown: but of all those, who have hitherto told me I am handsome, and seem'd to feel what they said, not one has touch'd my heart. Young as I am, I am sensible of all the dangers of an engagement: besides, I own the many things I have heard said of men, have put me very much upon my guard against them. Amongst all those, I see, I do not find one, if you except the Marquis, I can think worthy to please me. I meet with nothing every where but ridicule, which, for being brilliant, does not displease me the less. In the mean time, I do not flatter myself I am born insensible;

infenfible; but as yet I have met with nothing that can make me ceafe to be fo. You are not open-hearted, replied the lady, and I have fome reafon to think, tho' little you feem to make of men, that there is one who has found favour in your eyes; and yet it is not the marquis. You have been of this opinion for fome days paff, faid the unknown, but what grounds have you, for imagining fuch a thing? I have been but a fhort time in Paris: I never was any where without you; you know all my acquaintances. Pray, inform me, who is this object that has fo fenfibly charm'd me? you know I am fincere, if your remarks are juft, I fhall acquiefce. Do you remember then your unknown? replied the lady, how attentively you look'd at him? the care you took to make me take notice of him? add to this, the advantageous opinion you conceiv'd of his underftanding, from fome words of his, prettily exprefs'd indeed, but too frivolous, to make you determine, fo haftily in his favour: a prejudice which arifes from, or at leaft, leads the way to love. Shall I give you other proofs, ftill lefs doubtful, tho' perhaps you are not fenfible of them yourfelf? do you remember with what precipitation, you inquir'd who he was, and that he alone, excited your curiofity, in a place where there were fo many others, who might have at leaft fhar'd in it? the pleafure you conceiv'd, when you were told his name and quality? how much you talk'd of him that night? call to mind the thoughtfulness in which you were plung'd, all the time we were in the country, your diftractions, the fighs that escap'd you without

without any apparent cause. And what am I to think of that mild, that tender languishing, visible in your eyes, and that influences all your actions? of the disturbance and blushes these remarks occasion? If these be not symptoms of love in you, they are such at least, as it begins with in others. In this case then, replied the unknown, I may safely think I resemble no one. I shall make no defence against all you have said, yet hope to convince you, your remarks have been misapplied. 'Tis true, I ask'd, who this unknown was; take from that curiosity, the eagerness you thought you saw in it, I flatter myself you will find nothing but what is very natural. The importunate obstinacy with which he persisted in looking at me, chiefly occasion'd it, and at the same time, some desire I had of observing him. I'll tell you more, I thought there was something noble in his appearance, and very becoming in his deportment: two things, I found that day, peculiar to him, and which struck you, as well as me. What he said, and I remember'd, you thought agreeably, and humorously told; and I must not forget, that you reminded me of some touches of his wit, which I did not perfectly recollect. Was it love that made them present to your memory? when I talk'd of him, you know my mother was the cause. You say I was absent and pensive in the country, that I sigh'd and look'd languishingly; methinks these dispositions only prove a weariness of a country life, very allowable in a young person, who, from a convent she was tired of, was brought to a country seat, where

where ſhe had ſpent a whole year, with very little amuſement; and who, as I may ſay, ſaw Paris for the firſt time, and diſliked being torn from pleaſures quite new to her. Can you perceive, Madam, in all this, that love you were juſt now ſo ſure of? yet, as I am ſincere, I will own honeſtly to you, that this unknown, who did not long remain ſo to me, if he has not made an impreſſion on me, has not diſpleas'd me. When I think of him, it is always in an advantageous, tho' not an intereſting light, and if love conſiſts in your deſcription, I am far from feeling any of its effects.

LOVE in a vertuous mind diſguiſes itſelf for a long time, replied the lady; its firſt impreſſion is made almoſt imperceptibly; in the beginning it appears nothing more than an innocent liking, we eaſily juſtify to ourſelves. Doth this liking gain ground, we readily find excuſes for its progreſs. Senſible at length, to the tumult it has rais'd in our breſts, either it is too late, or we have no longer an inclination to oppoſe it. The ſoul intent upon ſo pleaſing an error, dreads to be deliver'd from it; far from thinking to deſtroy, we do all we can to confirm ourſelves in it. One wou'd imagine we were afraid this ſentiment did not ſufficiently operate of itſelf. We induſtriouſly ſeek every thing that can ſupport the diſorder in our minds, we entertain, we nourish it, with all the Chimæras our imagination can ſuggeſt. If ſometimes reaſon ſteps in, and offers us light, 'tis no more than a glimmering extinguiſh'd in an inſtant, ſerves juſt to ſhew us the precipice, but laſts not long enough to prevent

vent our falling in. In making us ashamed of our weakness, she tyrannizes over us, fortifies herself in our hearts, by the very efforts we make to drive her thence, and there either extinguishes all the passions, or becomes their principle. To lull ourselves in greater security, we are vain enough to think, we shall never surrender, that the pleasure of loving may be always innocent. In vain is experience against us, it prevents not our fall. One wrong step is insensibly follow'd by another; we are undone with all our virtue about us, without being present, as I may say, to the fatal moment of our defeat; and afterwards we find ourselves culpable, not only without knowing how we came to be so, but often before we thought it was possible for us ever to be capable of guilt. Heavens! cried the unknown, what a portrait! how it strikes me with horror!

Do not imagine, said the lady, I have drawn it without reason: it does not resemble your present situation; but I think it necessary you should know how weak the heart is, and learn from thence, that you can never be too much upon your guard. I agree with you, Madam, said the unknown, and the more readily, that I think the most deserving lover, unworthy the smallest trouble he costs us. That way of thinking, replied the lady, is a little too general; but I am not sorry to see you of it: so few men are ever tender and constant, so few are capable of a sincere passion, we are so often, and so unworthily made victims to our own credulity, and their falshood, that I believe, it wou'd even be dangerous

dangerous to except one. And you, above all women, ſhou'd think, for the peace of your mind, that no man is worthy to pleaſe you. Deſtin'd perhaps to be ſacrific'd to him, whom of all men, you wou'd chuſe leaſt, do not add to the torment already too cruel, of living for him alone, the dreadful torture of wiſhing to live for another. If your heart cannot meet with content, ſuffer it not to be torn to pieces.

THEY then ſtood up: in riſing, my unknown turn'd to the place I was in; but diſappear'd ſo ſuddenly, I ſcarcely enjoy'd her ſight for an inſtant. The uneaſineſs I felt, from what ſhe had ſaid, did not make me forget to follow her; but unwilling ſhe ſhou'd think, I had been liſtning, I went to meet her a different way, from that I ſaw her take.

I WAS greatly dejected with what I had heard, tho' it ſeem'd to inform me *Germueil* was not the perſon beloved. I found myſelf diſengag'd from the apprehenſions, that the moſt dangerous rival I cou'd have, had won her heart; but if it were not *Germueil*, who cou'd he be, whom ſhe honour'd, with ſo tender a remembrance? for ſome time, I flatter'd myſelf, I was the perſon: I recollected, I had gaz'd on her, with that obſtinacy ſhe complain'd of; ſeveral things ſeem'd applicable to me. A ſtrong deſire of being that unknown, ſtill more than my vanity, made me adopt the flattering picture ſhe had drawn. The joy I conceiv'd, from this idea, was quickly deſtroy'd by another, which carried an equal face of probability. I had examined her with great
attention,

attention, 'twas visible how much her charms affected me; but was I the only one ravish'd with her sight? I had seen her no where, but at the opera, and in this conversation, from which I had surpriz'd her secrets; but there was no mention either of time, or place, where this unknown had made an impression on her: what seem'd to relate to me, might as well relate to any other person. Besides, this unknown, by what she said, was now no longer unknown to her. Then she must have seen him again. But why must it not be *Germueil*? do I know how long, and in what manner he has got acquainted with her? alas! said I to myself, what is it to me, who is the object of her passion, since I am not? tho' it shou'd not be *Germueil*, shall I be the less miserable? during these reflections, the justness of which threw me into despair, I had walk'd so fast, that notwithstanding the round I had taken, I was almost come up with her. I felt as much delight in seeing her, as if from thence I had really any reason to hope.

SHE was walking carelessly, in the grand alley, near the piece of water that terminates it. I stood for a time in admiration of the dignity of her person, of the infinite charms and grace in all her motions. Whatever transports I felt at so enchanting a sight, still I wish'd for a nearer view; but my timidity made me tremble, to think of presenting myself before her eyes: I desir'd, yet I dreaded the happy moment, that was to restore them to me; it surpriz'd me in this confusion of thought.

thought. My extafies redoubled. I profited of the fpace ftill between us, to look at her, with all the tendernefs ſhe had inſpired me with. In proportion as ſhe advanced towards me, I felt my confuſion encreasing; and my timidity renewing. Seiz'd with an univerfal trembling, ſcarcely had I ſtrength to walk. I loſt all manner of affurance: I remark'd, that when ſhe found we were within a few paces of one another, ſhe turn'd her eyes from me; that bringing them back, and finding mine ſtill fix'd on her, ſhe withdrew them again. I attributed this to the uneaſineſs my too great forwardneſs gave her, and was in ſome doubt, whether it might not be owing to diſlike, or perhaps averſion. Far from reſiſting ſo cruel an idea, or flattering myſelf my appearance had made a more gentle impreſſion, I was ſtruck with ſuch an awe; that, in paſſing by her, I did not dare to liſt up my eyes on her, as I had done before: I even ſeem'd to turn them another way. With grief I perceiv'd this precaution was uſeleſs; my unknown had not ſo much as taken notice of me. I wonder'd, and was afflicted at her diſdain. My vanity perſuaded me, I did not deſerve ſuch cruel treatment. No doubt, my heart then made its firſt ſhoot towards what it afterwards turn'd out. I imagin'd I deceiv'd myſelf; and unable to think meanly, for any time, of my own merit, I concluded that modeſty alone had made her behave in ſo deſpiſing a manner.

THEY walk'd ſo ſlowly, that I flatter'd myſelf I cou'd, without appearing to intend it, come up
with

with them once more. I kept on my way, not without often looking behind me, as much to observe the road my unknown wou'd take, as in hopes to surprize her in the same attention with regard to me. But my last expectation was vain, I cou'd only discover she was making towards the gate of the Pont Royal. Instantly I turn'd about, and flying thro' different alleys, got there almost as soon as they did. I made room for her in the most respectful manner ; my civility obtain'd me a curtsey, which she made me with coldness and down-cast-eyes. I call'd to mind every opportunity I had read in romances, of lovers talking to their mistresses, and was surpriz'd not to find one to my purpose. Several times I wish'd she might slip her foot, that she had even strain'd it ; I saw no other way of beginning a conversation with her ; but I was disappointed, she mounted her coach, without any accident happening that I cou'd take advantage of.

UNFORTUNATELY, neither my equipage or attendants were at this gate. Depriv'd thus of the means of sending after her, I was just on the point of following her myself, but, besides that my dignity, and the distinguishable manner in which I was dress'd, forbid such a step, I cou'd never expect to be able to keep up with her coach for any time. A thousand times I repented I had not been set down at this gate, I shou'd then have taken such measures as wou'd infallibly have discover'd who this unknown was ; but it was now too late, and I reproach'd myself as much as if I ought to have divin'd that she

ſhe was at the Thuilleries, and that this was the gate ſhe was to come in at.

I RETURN'D home more in love than ever, piqued at the indifference of my unknown, big with what I had heard her ſay, and from my ſoul deſtelling, without knowing him, the man in whoſe favour ſhe had declar'd herſelf, ſince I cou'd no longer flatter myſelf with that happineſs. To compleat my diſquiet, the indulgent Madam *Lurſay*'s rendezvous was yet to come. So far was I from being any longer pleas'd with the thoughts of it, that I wou'd moſt gladly have diſpens'd with it. I was but too well convinc'd in beholding my unknown, that ſhe alone had power over my heart; I had nothing left for Madam *Lurſay*, but thoſe fleeting emotions which every man in the gay world feels for what they call a pretty woman, and which probably, had ſhe not taken ſo much pains with me, I ſhou'd have felt leſs for her than any other of the ſex.

My unknown's converſation ſerv'd more to diſturb than cure me. The inexpressible joy I had in ſeeing her, the very love I concluded ſhe had for another, awaken'd in my ſoul all the violence of my paſſion; and however mortifying the conſequences, I choſe rather to be miſerable on her account, than be made happy by Madam *Lurſay*. What have I to do with her rendezvous? ſaid I to myſelf; What made her give me one? I never aſk'd it. I muſt go, truly, to hear her tell me ſhe will not,

not, she cannot, love me ; that her heart is too delicate. Would ! this may be all she has prepar'd for me ! but that's impossible ; yesterday she was more humanely dispos'd ; there still may be some conflict between love and vertue ; but I shall be unfortunate enough not to see the latter triumphant. I was tempted for a time not to go to Madam *Lursay's*, but to write to her, that business of the greatest importance, prevented my waiting on her that evening : I afterwards made objections to this intention, so many, that unable to fix on any thing, I spent the greatest part of the day at home, and alone. I determin'd at length to go to Madam *Lursay's* ; but so late, that no longer expecting me, she had admitted visitors, who were with her in great numbers when I arriv'd. She receiv'd me with great coldness, scarcely vouchsafing to lift her eyes off a piece of tapistry she was working at. Nor was I, on the other side, very earnest in paying her my compliments ; finding she said nothing to me, I went and amus'd myself with looking over the persons at play. Undoubtedly, nothing cou'd be more uncivil than this proceeding, and greatly incens'd she seem'd to be at it ; but I was little concern'd whether she was offended or not, provided I cou'd keep out of her reach of telling me so. She did not, however, intend to be long silent ; the insult was too glaring. First, to have kept her so long waiting, then, to come in so unconcernedly, without so much as offering the least excuse, without even appearing to think there was any necessity for one, and no manner of notice taken of her discontent ;

discontent; what greater crimes cou'd I have been guilty of? but what enhance'd their grievoufnefs, they were all crimes againft fentiment. She waited a confiderable time to fee if I wou'd return to her, but finding I had no fuch thoughts, ſhe arofe, made two or three turns, then came to the fide of the room where I was. Her drefs that day was calculated to entice my looks, and captivate my heart: her charms were fet forth in the gallanteft and moft elegant diſhabille: her head-drefs negligently put on, not much paint, every thing contributed to add tendernefs to her looks: her ornaments in ſhort, were fuch as women employ more with a view to raviſh the ſenſes, than dazzle the fight. No doubt, ſhe knew all the merits of this drefs, ſince ſhe had choſen it on an occaſion which ſhe look'd upon to be of the higheſt importance.

UNDER pretence of looking over the card-players, ſhe drew near me. I had not as yet look'd at her very attentively; in ſpite of all my prepoſſeſſions againſt her, I was ſtruck with her beauty. Something ſo ſweet, ſo engaging ſparkled from her eyes, her charms, animated by deſire, and perhaps a certainty of pleaſing, had ſo much vivacity, 'twas not in my power to reſiſt their influence. I cou'd not refrain looking at her with a ſort of complacency I had never felt for her before, and indeed never before had I ſeen her look ſo handsome. She had no longer that ſettled ſeverity in her countenance, which had made me ſo often tremble; ſhe now conſented to appear, and to be thought ſuſceptible, and deſirous

desirous of pleasing. Our eyes met: I found such languishing in hers, that the emotion already stir'd up by her charms, communicated itself to my heart, where the disorder seem'd every instant to encrease. A few sighs, she affected partly to stifle, overcame me absolutely; in that dangerous moment, she got the better of all the love I had for my unknown.

MADAM *Lursay* had too much experience to be mistaken in her operations, and not turn them to immediate advantage; she no sooner perceiv'd the impression she had made; than looking at me once more with greater tenderness than ever, she return'd to her seat. Without reflecting, scarcely without knowing what I was doing, I follow'd her; she replac'd herself at her tapisstry, and seem'd so entirely taken up with her work, she did not so much as lift up her eyes. I waited for some time, to see if she wou'd speak to me; but finding she persisted in silence; your work, Madam, said I, employs all your attention. She easily perceiv'd by my tone of voice how much I was mov'd, and without making any reply, she gave me an under-look; a look not the most insignificant a woman can make use of, and which, on certain occasions, is absolutely decisive. You have not been abroad to day, Madam, continued I. Lord! no sir, answer'd she, looking carelessly, and if I don't forget, I think I said I did not intend it. How cou'd I then be so forgetful, resum'd I. You need not reproach yourself, sir, answered she, the affair in itself is so trifling and indifferent, that I too forgot you had promis'd
to

to come. As long as you do not fail me more essentially, you fhall always find me ready to forgive; probably we might have been alone together: and what cou'd we have had to fay? Do you know that a tête a tête is oftentimes more embarrassing than fcandalous. I know not, replied I, but I am fure I fo ardently wifh'd for it.—What nonfence! interrupted ſhe, either ceafe entirely to ſpeak on the ſubject, or be more conſiſtent with yourſelf. Are not you ſenſible, that of the ſimpleſt thing in nature, you are actually making the moſt ridiculous? how do you imagine I can believe you? If you had had a mind to come, what cou'd prevent you? Myſelf, Madam, answered I, who dread engaging with you. But you ſee to how little purpoſe, continued I, taking her by the hand ſhe had under her work. And now, Sir, ſaid ſhe, not taking it away, and ſmiling, what is it you require? That you ſhou'd tell me you love me, answered I. And when I have told you ſo replied ſhe, I ſhall be more unfortunate, and you leſs in love. No, I'll tell you nothing; gueſs me if you can, added ſhe, looking earneſtly at me. That you have already forbid me, Madam, answered I. Ah! cried ſhe, I did not think I had ſaid ſo much, but in revenge I am determin'd to ſay no more. I then preſs'd her to ſpeak, but ſhe perſiſted in ſilence: for ſome time neither of us ſaid a word; but our eyes were fix'd on each other, and I ſtill held her by the hand. How good am I, and how ridiculous are you! ſaid ſhe at laſt: I can't but think what an odd ſcene we are both acting here. A word with you, added ſhe,

she, with an air of reflection, I think I have told you I was sincere, and I am now glad I have an opportunity of proving it. Naturally I am not very susceptible; to save me from the perils of youth, I was not oblig'd to much precaution. It wou'd be monstrous in me, to give into an oddity at this time of day, which, for a thousand reasons you are not sensible of, might be more unpardonable than ever: at the same time, I own I like you. I have but one thing more to add. Insure me against all I have to fear from your youth and inexperience; let your conduct authorise me to place a confidence in you, you shall have no reason to complain of my want of affection. This avowal I make you, costs me dear; will you believe me, it is the first of the kind I ever made in my life. I cou'd, nay, I ought to have kept you longer in suspense; but I hate artifice, no body is more averse to it than I am. Be faithful and prudent: I spare you a deal of anxiety, by imparting to you a secret, you wou'd not for a long time have found out; deserve that one day I tell you more. Ah! Madam, cried I, -----No thanks, interrupted she, they are unreasonable at present; and at all times I wou'd have you cautious in giving them. This night perhaps we may have an opportunity of entertaining one another. No, I cannot think of leaving you, Madam, until you tell me you love me. To press me so earnestly to such an avowal at this juncture, replied she, is shewing you know but little how to value it; do what I desire, let us drop a conversation which has perhaps been but too much remark'd already.

WITH

WITH some reluctance I obey'd ; but inftead of joining the company, intoxicated with fo near a profpect of happinefs, I retir'd to a corner, to meditate on the pleasures promis'd in fo fine a conqueft. I was fo fituated as to have a full view of Madam *Lurfay* : my eyes were eternally on her ; ſhe in return darted glances charg'd with tendernes and voluptuoufnefs. Thus at length this imperious beauty, who had never, as ſhe ſaid herſelf, felt a paſſion before, ſigh'd, and own'd ſhe ſigh'd for me. I was the only man ſhe had ever lov'd ! I triumph'd over all Plato's vertue, I ſay Plato's ; for without underſtanding his doctrine, I ſaw plainly that, if ever I was to hear more of it, it muſt be with mitigation, and to mitigate was to annihilate it.

STILL Madam *Lurfay* had ſeveral reſources againſt me, had ſhe thought proper to put them in practice. That character of ſeverity ſhe had aſſum'd, and which, however falſe in itſelf, check'd her in her own deſires ; the ſhame of yielding too ſuddenly, particularly to one who, gueſſing at nothing, wou'd leave her all the diſagreeableneſs of contrivance ; the apprehenſions of my indiſcretion, and our intimacy once diſcover'd, wou'd expoſe her the more to ridicule, that ſhe had always ſet up for a perſon incapable of ſuch weakneſſes ; her very coquetry which made her take more delight in amuſing herſelf with, than gratifying my paſſion, and which probably had occaſion'd her inconfiſtencies more than all the reſt.

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FOR, when the heart of a virtuous woman comes to be surpris'd, when once she acknowledges it's surrender, there is nothing more to be combated with. The artful practices of coquets, and the outward affections of prudes, are equally inconsistent with her character. Without disguise she resisted, and without disguise she capitulates: in fine, she yields because she can no longer hold out. The most despicable conquests are sometimes the most troublesome; hypocrisie is ever more scrupulous than virtue.

• THO' Madam *Lursay* seem'd at length to have got the better of her scruples, I still dreaded one of those changes to which I knew her to be so very liable. I shou'd gladly have given her no time for reflection. I imagin'd a woman of her strictness and severity must become a prey to the most cruel remorse. The more signaliz'd my victory appear'd, the more I dreaded to see it snatch'd from me. To have conquer'd a heart 'till then inaccessible, cou'd any thing be more glorious! this idea sway'd more in my mind, than all Madam *Lursay*'s charms; and I am since convinc'd, by the manner in which it then affected me, that it is of more importance for women to flatter our vanity, than move our passions.

• THE more I reflected on what Madam *Lursay* had said, the more I found reason to be satisfied she intended to make me happy. She soon came back to me, and in a conversation on various subjects, she

ſhe artfully introduc'd ſeveral refin'd and paſſionate expreſſions, in which ſhe diſplay'd all the agreeableneſs of her wit, and the tenderneſs of her heart. I admired in ſecret how much love embellishes a woman, and cou'd, no other way account for the prodigious attraction in Madam *Lurſay*'s whole perſon: transports half ſuppreſs'd, and perhaps the more flattering; ſtolen glances, ſighs which I alone heard: nothing was conceal'd, and nothing ſhe did not give me room to expect. At ſupper, ſhe plac'd me by her, and never once abated of her endearments as long as it laſted; with the eyes of the whole company on her, ſhe found means to make me ſenſible ſhe thought of nothing but me. Such a ſituation added greatly to my natural confuſion.

ALL the answers ſhe cou'd get from me, to the many tender things ſhe ſaid, were, ſometimes, awkward ſmiles, perhaps ſome compliments, ſo ill put together, that my words had no more meaning than my looks. But I might have behav'd a thouſand times worſe, without incurring Madam *Lurſay*'s diſpleaſure. To be thoughtful, diſtracted, and ſtupid, were to her incontestible proofs of love; and I never obſerv'd more tenderneſs in her eyes, than when I had made her ſome very abſurd answer. She is not the only lady I have ſeen in the ſame circumſtances. Women often adore our greateſt follies, when they can flatter themſelves they proceed from love.

IN ſpite of my love, and all the tender ſenſations I felt for Madam *Lurſay*, my unknown had more

than once return'd to my mind. But I was so far from allowing myself to indulge in her idea, that I endeavour'd all I cou'd to stifle it in my breast; with ever so little encouragement, it seem'd to acquire too great an ascendant over me. I reproach'd myself with perfidy for all I was doing for Madam *Lursay*; to keep alive the desire of pleasing her, it was necessary to forget to what a degree I lov'd my unknown, whose idea I strove to banish by the thoughts of approaching pleasure. I shou'd have chosen much rather to have enjoy'd with my unknown, what I expected from Madam *Lursay*, but I did not find myself the less dispos'd to accept of the bounties of the latter.

SUPPER ended, *Meilcour*, said Madam *Lursay*, whilst every body was rising from table, you see it is not possible for us to entertain one another this night; and in the main, I own to you, I am not sorry for it, probably you wou'd have given me reason to complain. Me! Madam, answered I, do you then doubt of my respect? Yes, truly, replied she; for, in such a case, I have not that good opinion of your discretion: not but that I shou'd know how to make you keep your distance; but, after all, I think it is better you come to morrow.

I cou'd not help smiling at these words: 'twas whimsical enough, I thought, that she shou'd give me a rendezvous for the next day, to avoid my present want of respect. I comprehend you, continued she; you are thinking we shall not be alone. I

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was fo piqued to find myfelf difappointed of all my hopes, that I was juft going to answer her; as you like it. But Madam, faid I, recovering myfelf, why muft I not be happy in your company this night? Beaufe, answered ſhe, there are too many people here, and it wou'd not be decent for you to ſtay when they are gone. Blame no body but yourfelf; it was in your power to have avoided ſuch a crowd of witneſſes. You confound me, Madam, answered I, and I am the more embarraſs'd, that nothing offers to my imagination capable of extricating me out of ſuch diſagreeable circumſtances. I cannot conceive, ſaid ſhe, what ſhou'd make you ſo anxious about an affair in itſelf ſo indifferent: but ſince it is of that importance to you, let us conſider what meaſures we are to take.

It is natural, upon theſe occaſions, for the moſt experienc'd to charge themſelves with the management of affairs, and Madam *Lurſay* thought ſhe cou'd, without ſeeming to take too much upon her, furniſh me with an expedient, that wou'd free us both from our uneaſineſs. But, for decency ſake, it was neceſſary firſt to appear greatly alarm'd at her ſituation. And indeed for a conſiderable time ſhe meditated profoundly: propos'd twenty different ſchemes one after another, which ſhe inſtantly condemn'd herſelf, at length, as if all her ingenuity was exhausted, ſhe concluded by telling me, that the ſafeſt and beſt method was for me to retire. I objected to this laſt propoſal, but not very warmly: too unexperienc'd to think there was any poſſibility

of getting over so many difficulties, I gave her to understand I thought she was in the right. Little expecting so abrupt a decision, she came to a resolution at once.

THERE'S no doubt, said she, but I am in the right, that's very evident. For, in reality, I see nothing, no, not the least circumstance that can forward our intentions. Not, when all is said, that I imagine your staying cou'd give room to think there is any thing particular between us; nothing can be more innocent: But the world is censorious, you are young, things wou'd never be judg'd to be as they really are; an interview, which was certainly neither look'd for, or intended, and which there is even no necessity to conceal, they wou'd construe into an intrigue, call it a premeditated rendezvous. This wou'd be very cruel, yet to all this I shou'd be expos'd, and that in the most severe, bitter manner. The sacrifice I shou'd make, wou'd be but a trifle to you, but wou'd utterly undo me. I see, Sir, you are affected by this reverse, and it grieves me to be oblig'd to discuss this point so long. There are undoubtedly, numbers of women, who wou'd not be in the least disconcerted at all this, but I am so unaccustom'd to such things, you must not be surpriz'd to find me so much alarm'd. However, if the purity of intention can give ease to the mind, I have certainly nothing to reproach myself for: I repeat it once more, nothing can be more innocent than our being alone together. I doubt not but you will employ those moments in
telling

telling me you love me ; but you may fay as much to me before all the world : and fince I cannot impofe you filence on that head, I think it is better no-body fhould hear you but myfelf. But, added ſhe, all thefe reflections are not to the purpoſe----- Are any of your ſervants here ? I anfwer'd her, they were ; Wou'd you have me ſend them away ? My God ! by no means, that's not what I want. But -----at what hour did you order your equipage to return ? Was it at twelve ? It was, Madam, anfwer'd I. I am ſorry for that, replied ſhe, at that hour I expect this company will leave me. What if I ſend order's for it not to come till-----two, for example, interrupted ſhe ; ſince that was your thought, why did you not ſpeak it out ? This expedient removes all difficulties, and I am charm'd with you for having imagin'd it. Under pretence of waiting for your ſervants, you will have an excuſe for remaining, and if any body ſhou'd offer to ſet you down at home, I ſuppoſe you know what apology to make ? All the reply I made, was a paſſionate ſqueeze of the hand ; then went out to give my orders, laughing within myſelf, to find ſhe attributed to me, all the glory of a ſtratagem ſo juſtly due to herſelf.

WHEN I return'd, I found the company again ſeated to cards, and Madam *Lurſay*, complaining of a prodigious megrim. Notwithſtanding all my imbecility, I plainly ſaw this indispoſition was only feign'd, that we might be the ſooner at liberty to converse with one another ; I cou'd not conceive how

people cou'd be so unpolite, as not to break up their parties, and leave the lady to her so much wanted repose, but my reflections and impatience did not prevent their finishing their games. Tormented by this delay, I cast a melancholy look on Madam *Lursay*, as if to ask her what was the reason they made us so unhappy; she, by the most engaging smiles, gave me to understand the part she took in my uneasiness.

THE so much wish'd for minute came at last: the company prepar'd to go. I too went out and pretended to be much surpriz'd to meet none of my attendants in the hall. What Madam *Lursay* had foreseen did not fail to happen. An offer was made me to be set down at home; I return'd thanks, but with a disconcerted air; they then press'd me to accept of the offer, which threw me into still greater confusion; and I believe, for want of knowing what excuse to make, I must at last have let myself be carried off, had not Madam *Lursay*, fertile in contrivance, and whose genius was not so easily puzzled as mine, came seasonably to my relief. Don't you see, said she smiling, to those who were tormenting me in this polite manner, you constrain him, undoubtedly, he has no mind any body shou'd know where he intends going: you may be sure he has some assignation on his hands. But it cannot be long, Sir, continued she, turning to me, before your equipage arrives, and tho' I am troubled with a prodigious head-ach, I will readily permit you to stay here till that time. She pronounc'd these words with

with fo natural an air, it was impoffible not to be deceiv'd. I thank'd her in a faltering voice. They attributed my embarrafsment to her jeft, after rallying me a little on my fuppos'd good fortune, they left us to ourfelves.

I NO fooner found myfelf alone with Madam *Lurfay*, but I was feiz'd with the moft horrible fright I ever was in in my life. The revolution I felt thro' all my fenfes, is not to be describ'd. I trembled, my voice fail'd, I dared not to lift my eyes on her. She eafily perceiv'd my vaft difturbance, and defired me, in the moft gentle manner, to feat myfelf by her on a fopha where ſhe lay, half extended, her head reclining on a pillow, with a carelefs unattentive air, amufing herfelf with knotting. Now and then ſhe caſt her eyes on me in a languifhing manner, inſtantly I caſt down mine with the greateſt ſhew of reſpect. I believe ſhe waited out of malice for me to break ſilence firſt, which I at laſt determin'd to do. You are knotting then, Madam, ſaid I with a trembling voice. At this ingenious and intereſting remark, Madam *Lurfay* look'd at me with aſtoniſhment. Whatever notion ſhe might have had of my timidity, and inexperience, 'twas inconceivable to her how I cou'd find nothing elſe to ſay. However, as ſhe did not care to diſcourage me, ſhe ſeem'd not to have taken notice of what I had ſaid. I am ſorry you have ſtaid here, ſaid ſhe; I begin to think the ſtratagem we juſt now thought ſo lucky will not have the deſired effect. I ſee no inconveniency that can

possibly arise, Madam, said I. For my part, said she, I see but one, and that indeed is a terrible one. You spoke too much to me just now, and I fear people may have guess'd what you were saying: I wish you wou'd be more discreet in company. But it is impossible Madam, replied I, that I shou'd have been overheard. No matter for that, answer'd she, people always begin by slandering first, and put off till afterwards examining whether there was just cause. I remember we convers'd for some time on a subject which does not generally give indifference to our looks. When you tell a person you love her, you endeavour to persuade her to believe you; such language, tho' it were not to come from the heart, gives life to the eyes. You, for example, seem'd to me, who examin'd you, to have more fire, more tenderness at that time, than perhaps you were aware of: 'Twas unwillingly, nay, without your being mov'd enough to cause any alteration in your countenance, yet, I perceiv'd a visible change in it. I fear you will one day be a deceiver; and I pity before-hand all the women you will think of paying your addresses to. You have the appearance of sincerity, your expressions are passionate and lively, and paint sentiment with an impetuosity not to be resisted; and I must own to you-----but no, said she interrupting herself, and in some confusion, 'twou'd be to no purpose for me to tell you what I think. Speak, Madam, I beseech you, said I tenderly, tell me how it is possible for me to make myself worthy to please you. To please me! replied she; ah! *Meilcour*, that is a thing I wou'd not

not for the world fhould happen; if you have form'd fuch a defign, I moft heartily conjure you to abandon it: Whatever reasons I may have to fly the joys of love, how little foever they may feem made for me, 'tis far from being impoffible but you may render me fenfible to them. Heavens! continued ſhe in a tragical tone, am I then referv'd for fuch a misfortune, have I till now avoided all the approaches of love, but, to be the more cruelly fubjected to all the tyranny of it's dominion!

THESE expreffions of Madam *Lurfay*, and the moving accent with which ſhe pronounc'd them, melted my very foul, I cou'd return her no answer. During our mutual ſilence, ſhe ſeem'd buried in thought, darted confus'd glances, lifted up her eyes to heaven, then let them fall tenderly on me, with reluctance took them off again: her boſom heav'd with fighs; there was ſomething ſo natural and moving in all this diforder, ſhe look'd ſo beautiful, and fill'd me with ſo much reſpect, that, if I had been till then unmindful of pleaſing, I ſhould certainly now have been ſtrongly inspir'd with that deſire.

AND why, ſaid I in an intermitting voice, why wou'd it be a misfortune to you? Can you ask me fuch a queſtion, replied ſhe? Do you think I can be blind to the inequality that is between us? Perhaps, now that you tell me you love me, you are ſincere; but how long will you be ſo, and how ſeverely ſhall I be puniſh'd for my too great credulity?

ty? I shou'd be no more than a mere amusement to you, but to me you wou'd become a real object of attachment. Too young to be made constant, on me wou'd be laid all the blame due to the fickleness of your youth. The fewer excuses I shou'd give you for inconstancy, the greater wou'd be your indifference, at the time I shou'd be most careful and solicitous to bring you back, you, neglectful of every means of pleasing, wou'd consider me less as the woman who lov'd you, than, as an object become absolutely insupportable; nay, you wou'd push things so far, as even to upbraid yourself with having ever shewn me the least tenderness; and if I escap'd being unworthily sacrific'd, if you did not think proper to publish my weakness to the whole world, it wou'd be less owing to your probity, than the terror of a ridicule, you wou'd dread bringing on yourself, for owning you ever had lov'd me.

MADAM *Lursay*, I believe, wou'd have gone on longer in this dismal strain, had she not perceiv'd how deeply I was affected by it; tears just starting from my eyes, and an universal dispiritedness. To restore me to tranquillity, she thought it necessary to speak with less majesty.

NOT that I imagine you, said she with gentleness, capable of such foul proceedings; no indeed: but I repeat it to you again, I fear more from your age than my own; moreover, you wou'd never consent to love me in the manner I shou'd direct. Believe me, Madam, answer'd I, you shall always find

find your will to be the rule of my conduct. I know not whether I ought to trust you, faid ſhe ſmiling, it is ſometimes imagin'd a proof of love to loſe reſpect; and there cannot be a more improper way of thinking: I do not pretend to ſay but that it is natural to expect the reward due to one's attention and perfeverance; whatever repugnance a woman may have to engaging too far, when once ſhe is perſuaded ſhe is lov'd, there is very little left to be combated with. When ſhall I then Madam, be ſo happy as to perſuade you? When? answer'd ſhe laughing; don't you ſee I'm half perſuaded already. You are allow'd to tell me you love me, and I am not far ſhort of answering you, I love you. You ſee what a confidence I have plac'd in you: I was not afraid to ſtay alone with you, I even help'd you to bring this interview about. Theſe, I ſhou'd think, are pretty ſtrong proofs of tenderneſs; and if you conſider them, properly, I believe you will have no reaſon left to complain. I am very ſenſible of all this, Madam, answered I, greatly embarraſs'd; but-----But, *Meilcour*, interrupted ſhe, do you know that the ſteps I have this night taken are very hazardous, and I muſt have thought as well of you, as in reality I do, to have ſuffer'd myſelf to engage in them? Hazardous! replied I, Yes, I repeat it again, extremely hazardous. For in truth, were it known, that you are here by my conſent, that I voluntarily came into the party; in a word, that it is not accidental, what wou'd not the world be intitled to ſay? Yet you ſee with how little juſtice they might ſpeak; no-body, ſurely, can be more
reſpectful

respectful than you are; and that is the way, tho' not generally believ'd, to obtain every thing. *Meilcour*, added she tenderly, how earnest you are to make yourself belov'd; how flattering is that air of innocence and confusion, discovering all the integrity of your soul?

SUCH expressions were too obliging not to deserve immediate thanks; in the transport they occasion'd, I had courage enough to dare throwing myself at her feet. Heavens! cried I, is it possible then for you to love me, and to tell me you do? Yes, *Meilcour*, answer'd she smiling and holding out her hand to me, yes, I do tell you so, and that with the greatest tenderness; will you be satisfied? I made her no answer but by a fervent squeeze of the hand I had seiz'd.

THIS bold attempt made *Madam Lursay* blush, and seem'd to put her in some confusion. She sigh'd — I sigh'd — neither said a word. I stop'd kissing her hand a moment, to gaze on her. The expression in her eyes pierc'd my soul, tho' I understood it not; they were so animated, so moving, and I read so much of love in them, that, certain my boldness wou'd be forgiven, I ventur'd again to kiss her hand. *Prithee* then, said she at last, will you not rise from that posture? What folly is all this? rise, I desire you. Alas! *Madam*, cried I, have I been so unfortunate as to displease you? Why, am I reproaching you with any thing, answer'd she languishingly? No, — you have not displeas'd me; but take your place

place again, or rather, depart, I hear your coach coming into the yard, and I will not have you keep it waiting. To-morrow, if you have a mind, you may come again, if I go abroad, it will not be till it is late. Adieu, ſaid ſhe laughing to find I ſtill kept faſt hold of her hand, I poſſitively inſiſt upon your going away. You have aſſum'd a boldneſs that makes me tremble, and I ſhou'd be very ſorry it were to continue. I endeavour'd to juſtify myſelf, but wou'd not comply with her requeſt; I thought ſhe preſs'd me to leave her in ſuch a manner as if ſhe did not chuſe to be obey'd: I inſiſted ſhe had not heard my coach. And ſuppoſing I did not, ſaid ſhe, I do not approve of your ſtaying here any longer. Have we not ſaid every thing we had to ſay? I think not, Madam, answer'd I ſighing; if ſometimes I am ſilent in your preſence, 'tis much leſs owing to a want of ſomething to ſay, than to the immense difficulty I find to expreſs all I feel. And that, ſaid ſhe replacing herſelf on the ſopha, is owing to a timidity, which I muſt make you get the better of: it ſhou'd ever be diſtinguiſh'd from reſpect; the latter is quite proper, the former is abſolutely ridiculous. For example, we are alone, you tell me you love me, I answer you to the ſame purpoſe, we are under no manner of constraint: the greater the indulgence I ſeem to grant to your deſires, the more you are to be eſteem'd for not making a wrong uſe of it. You are perhaps the only man in the world I know capable of ſuch gentle behaviour. And, in return, the averſion I have hitherto had to what I am now doing, ſhall ceaſe.

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I can flatter myself I have at length found a breast fill'd with the same sentiments as my own. That backwardness, which I praise in you, proceeds from respect; for, were you only timid, I have done enough to make you otherwise——You make me no answer? Because, Madam, replied I, I am sensible you are in the right, and I cou'd heartily wish you were in the wrong.

It may not be improper to remark, that when she replac'd herself on the sofa, I had again thrown myself at her feet: that then she allow'd me to lean on her knees; that with one hand she play'd with my hair; and suffer'd me to squeeze or kiss the other, for this important favour was at my election.

Oh! that I cou'd be sure of your constancy—and discretion, added she, lowering her voice.

So far from answering her as I shou'd have done, I was so insensible to the force of this exclamation, and knew so little how to value Madam *Lursay's* kindness, that I began to amuse myself with swearing to her, an eternal fidelity. The fire I saw darting from her eyes, and which wou'd have enlighten'd any body but me; her confusion, the alteration of her voice, her tender and frequent sighs; every thing contributed to favour the opportunity, but nothing cou'd make me think it was come. I imagin'd she had no other motive for leaving herself in my power, than that she was perswaded of the
infinite

infinite refpect I had for her; that one moment's boldnefs wou'd never be forgiven me; that ſhe was one of thoſe women, from whom every thing muſt be waited for, and to whom no minute is critical, which they do not chuſe ſhou'd be ſo: in ſhort, I form'd to myſelf ſo many and ſuch ſtrong illuſions, as abſolutely deaden'd my own deſires, and frustrated all the delicate Madam *Lurſay's* willingneſs to oblige me. The leſs reaſon ſhe had to think ſhe had not ſufficiently made herſelf underſtood, the greater ſhou'd have been her indignation againſt me. A gloomy thoughtfulness ſucceeded in her ſoul, and I ſhou'd have gone on till day, tormenting her with proteſtations of love, but more particularly of reſpect, had ſhe not, tir'd at length of her ridiculous ſituation, repeated to me over and over, and preſſingly too, that it was time for me to depart: She judg'd, like a woman of ſenſe, that there was nothing to be expected from me at preſent. Whatever unwillingneſs I ſhew'd to obey her, I cou'd not prevail; we parted, ſhe, no doubt, wondering how any man cou'd carry ſtupidity to ſuch a degree; and I, perſuaded that ſix aſſignations wou'd be little enough to bring me to a right underſtanding. At parting I imagin'd ſhe look'd at me with ſome coldneſs, which I chiefly attributed to the improper ſilence I obſerv'd at certain times.

I WAS no ſooner reſtor'd to myſelf, and my confuſion diſpers'd, but I began to think of what had paſs'd, differently from what I had thought during the time of action. The more I reflected on Madam *Lurſay's*

Lursay's kind behaviour and warm expressions, the more reasons I had to doubt my respect had been so properly placed as I intended.——To have behav'd at the second rendezvous as ill as at the first——yet, to have a third granted me—'twas very handsome, methought, for so great a professor of sentiment as Madam *Lursay*. It never came into my head, that any efforts I cou'd make, wou'd have given me victory, I only imagin'd I might have gain'd some further steps towards it. But, when all is said, was she not more in fault than I? Was I to know that every woman, who, in her circumstances talks of virtue, displays it less with a view of destroying the hopes of conquest, than in order to make it appear with the greater lustre? where was the use of all these subtilties? She might easily have imagin'd I shou'd have taken every thing for granted she thought proper to advance, tho' she had taken less pains to disguise it. A woman's cunning is thrown away when not practis'd on the man on whom she cannot impose. My virtue! your respect! pretty chosen words for a tête à tête! particularly with one who is not sensible how ill they are placed, and that true virtue never yet gave a rendezvous. In the midst of all my vexations for my bad success at this meeting, and my resolutions of behaving better at the next, I began again to think of my unknown; but the voluptuous scene I had just had with Madam *Lursay*; the chains in which I had in a manner bound myself to her; the impossibility I saw of ever obtaining the love of that unknown; impossibility, which, to justify my fickleness,

neſs, I now terrified myſelf with more than ever; the indifference I imagin'd the unknown had ſhewn me that very day; every thing contributed to make her leſs dear to me. However, I felt with how much eaſe, were I but once certain of her love, I cou'd ſacrifice Madam *Lurſay*; but at the ſame time, without that certainty, that I cou'd not abandon her. There was no diſguiſing to myſelf that when the unknown ſaw me, ſhe turn'd her eyes from me; that ſhe had put on that diſdainful look which the ſight of a diſagreeable object can alone excuſe; after ſtrict examination of my own charms, and the unpromiſing effects they had hitherto produc'd, I concluded, ſince my unknown did not love me, which I thought was very viſible, that either ſhe was prejudiced in favour of *Germenil*, or had a ſecret antipathy to handsome figures. At another time, perhaps I ſhou'd have been leſs preſumptuous; but the prodigious liking Madam *Lurſay* had taken to me, made me value my perſon at a very high-rate. I thought it was impoſſible a woman ſo little ſuſceptible as ſhe, cou'd find me dangerous, if in reality I were not ſo; and that nothing but the greateſt merit, was capable of making ſo deep an impreſſion. Notwithſtanding all the diſlike I ſuppos'd my unknown had to me, I ſtill took an intereſt in her; but I attributed this anxiety ſtill hovering round my heart, to the remains of an impreſſion too deeply rooted to be ſo ſuddenly effac'd; to ſtruggle againſt it, I was forc'd to call all Madam *Lurſay*'s charms to my aſſiſtance, and every thing that

that my approaching happiness cou'd present to my imagination most powerful and engaging.

I PREPAR'D to wait on her the next morning, and was in Madam de *Meilcour*'s apartment when word was brought—the Count de *Versac*—My Mother seem'd displeas'd at this visit; for he was the man in the world she lov'd least, and fear'd most upon my account; for which reason he seldom troubled her with his company. They neither car'd to see one another, and pretty much from the same motives, for what made him unfit for her, made her unfit for him. She had even forbid me to see him. Our acquaintance was very slight; we never met at the same houses, and I seldom went to court, where *Versac* spent most of his time.

VERSAC, of whom I shall have frequent occasion to make mention in the sequel of these memoirs, besides being of the first quality, was endow'd with all the charms of wit and sense, supported by the most amiable figure. Ador'd by all the women, whom he constantly deceiv'd and tore to pieces; vain, imperious, giddy, the most audacious petitemaitre that had ever appear'd, and the dearer perhaps in their eyes for those failings, tho' injurious they are to them;—be that as it will, they had brought him into vogue from the moment he made his appearance in life, and for ten years past, to him belong'd the glory of overcoming the most insensible, of fixing the greatest coquets, and displacing lovers of the best reputation; in which last attempt
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if he fometimes fail'd, he knew fo well how to turn things to his own advantage, that the lady always pafs'd for having been kind to him. He had a particular jargon of his own, which, tho' ftudied and prepar'd, feem'd ready and natural. Sedately humorous, and always agreeable, either from the things themfelves which he related, or the newnefs of the turns with which he beautified them, he gave new charms to what others might have faid before, but no-body cou'd repeat like him what he had been once the inventor of. The graces of his perfon as well as thofe of his mind were a fort of compofition; he knew when and how to affume thofe particular agreeable airs, which are neither to be taken off, or defin'd. However, there were few men who wou'd not gladly have imitated him; and among all thofe that did endeavour, not one who did not become more difagreeable: That peculiar lucky impertinence feem'd the gift of nature granted to him alone. No one cou'd in any fhape come up to him; and I who have fince trod fo advantageoufly in his fteps, and arriv'd at length to divide the Court and all *Paris* between us, was for a long time among the number of his constrain'd aukward copiers, who, without attaining to the fmalleft of his perfections, diffigur'd his failings, and added them to their own. Magnificently drefs'd, and always with tafte and dignity, he had the air of a nobleman, even when he affected it moft.

VERSAC, fuch as he was, had always pleas'd me much. I never faw him that I did not ftudy him,

him, and endeavour to catch those pompous airs, I admir'd so much in him. My mother, who, fond of plain dealing and sincerity, thought every thing ridiculous that was not natural, had discover'd my inclination to *Versac*, and was greatly alarm'd at it. For this reason, more than for any aversion she had to people of *Versac*'s character, she bore his company with impatience; but the deference we owe to one another in the world, and which is more particularly observ'd among persons of distinction, oblig'd her to constraint.

HE came bustling into the room, made an unattractive bow to Madam de *Meilcour*, and a much more careless one to me, spoke a little on indifferent things, and then began to talk scandal of so many persons, that my mother cou'd not help asking him, what all the world had done to him that he shou'd be continually tearing it to pieces? By the L—d, Madam, answer'd he, you ought much rather ask what I have done, that the whole world shou'd be eternally railing at me. I am surrounded, I am loaded, I am oppress'd with calumny, I am charg'd with ridiculousness and folly, as if others had not their share of both, and I, in particular, must shut my eyes! — But, a propos, is it long since you have seen the good Countess? My Mother answer'd him it was some time. But no-body sees her now that I can hear of, which gives me the greatest concern and uneasiness imaginable. What, Sir, has she taken to devotion, said Madam de *Meilcour*? Very probably, she will come to that, answer'd

fwere'd he; but at prefent her heart is pierc'd with the moft folemn grief; ſhe has juſt loſt her little Marquiſs, who has been guilty of the blackeſt infidelity ever heard of in the memory of man. As this is not the firſt time ſhe has been abandon'd, one wou'd imagine ſhe might eaſily comfort herſelf for this loſs, ſince to be accuſtom'd to miſfortunes makes them lighter; but there is a circumſtance attending this deſertion which makes it very particular. Pray Sir, what is it? Why——anſwer'd he (but how will you be able to conceive ſuch a thing of the lady in the world of the greateſt foreſight, and who always took her meaſures better than any woman at court) he was the only lover ſhe had left. To regain a reputation, ſhe had enter'd into a sentimental intrigue, but there's no man who is not ſoon diſguſted with his miſtreſs on theſe terms; and to make things ſtill more diſagreeable, her ungrateful took it into his head, to taſte the inhuman, barbarous pleaſure of having no ſucceſſor, and for that purpoſe, has painted her in ſuch colours as wou'd chill the moſt intrepid. Eight days are now over, ſince this fatal accident happen'd, and nothing has yet offer'd for her comfort. Nothing, you will allow Madam, can be more mortifying than ſuch an adventure. You muſt forgive me, Sir, ſaid my mother, if I do not believe a word of all this. How! Madam, ſaid *Versac*, nothing is more publickly known. Can you ſuſpect me of forging it for the Counteſs, who is one of the ladies in the world I conſider moſt, and have the greateſt eſteem for? What I have told you is as true as that ſhe and the
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divine *Lursay* have put on white paint all the days of their lives. I was ready to burst to hear *Versac* talk so injuriously of a person I respected so much, and whom I thought so deserving. New sort of calumny, said my mother, never did Madam *Lursay* put on white paint. Ay, Madam, said he, just as she never had any lovers. Lovers! Madam *Lursay* lovers! I was just going to cry out. Wou'd not one imagine, continued *Versac*, that she thinks no-body knows her. Who is ignorant that she has been tender-hearted for at least these fifty years? Was not this the universal, receiv'd opinion even before she married that unfortunate *Lursay*, who by way of a parenthesis was one of the filliest Marquises in all *France*? Is it not well known he surpriz'd her one day with *D*****, the next day with another, and two days after with a third; that at length, tir'd of surprizing her so often, and finding there was no end to it, he died on purpose to get shut of the inconveniency? Are there not several witnesses to the time of her commencing a prude, which she continues to be to this day? Is this an hindrance to—to—to—(he nam'd five or six) owing their education to her; did not I myself actually refuse her the pleasure of mine, is she not perhaps at this very time solliciting that gentleman's? added he, pointing to me. This Apostrophe made me blush to that degree, that with ever so little attention he might have easily perceiv'd how much I was affected by what he had said.

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DOES she imagine, continued he, that with her *Plato*, whom she neither understands or follows, she can impose on us so many obscure rendezvouses, and make us her dupes with as much facility as she does some young men, who ignorant both of the nature and number of her adventures, believe they adore in her a kind of divinity, and that they have the glory of overcoming a heart, that has never been subdued before.

THIS exact description of my situation remov'd all doubts about the truth of what *Versac* was saying. Blushing, I discover'd how much Madam *Lursay* had deceiv'd me, and resolv'd that instant, without fixing on the method, to make her pay dear for the esteem she had forc'd from me. Had I done myself justice, I shou'd have been sensible that I alone had laid the snare into which I had fallen; that Madam *Lursay*'s practices were common to all women; in a word, that there was less falsity in her proceedings, than folly in mine. But this reflection was then either too mortifying, or too much above me.

WHAT! said I to myself, to assure me she had never lov'd any body but me! So cruelly to abuse my credulity! Whilst I was taken up with these disagreeable thoughts, my mother, after denying every thing *Versac* had said of Madam *Lursay*, ask'd him how he, who had always appear'd to be her friend, cou'd inveigh so bitterly against her?

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Out of a pure spirit of justice said he; I have no patience with those female hypocrites, who plung'd in the very same irregularities which they blame in others, are continually boasting of their virtue, and wou'd fain impose upon Mankind. I have ten times more esteem for a woman of gallantry, she has one vice less: besides, since I must tell you all, this *Lursay*, has just play'd me one of the most abominable tricks, has cut out such a piece of work for me, you never heard of the like. You know Madam de **** the sweetest, the most delightful little novice! I had got acquainted with her, been admitted to visit her, was listen'd to, in short, I was in a fair way of persuading: she must come officiously and fill this young lady's head with fears and scruples, tells her she's lost, she's undone, if ever she sees me more; that I was made up of inconstancy and indiscretion! in fine, so prepossess'd her against me, that our quarrel lasted for three days—and I was not recall'd 'till this morning. Now, seriously speaking, Madam, is such usage ever to be forgiven?

VERSAC, after a few more touches which only serv'd to exasperate me still more against Madam *Lursay*, took his leave. My mother, who did not perceive how much I was affected by what I had heard, did all she cou'd to dissuade me from believing *Versac*; but in vain, I made all the haste I cou'd to Madam *Lursay*'s, determin'd, by shewing her the greatest contempt, to punish her for the ridiculous respect she had compell'd me to.

End of the FIRST PART.

MEMOIRS

OF

Monfieur de *MEILCOUR*.

PART II.

I LEFT home, fully determin'd to use Madam *Lursay* with all the contempt I thought she deserv'd : nor did I intend to be satisfied with barely telling her my mind, which wou'd only have mortified her for a moment ; I imagin'd my revenge cou'd not be compleat, unless I attack'd her in so furious and publick a manner as wou'd ruin her for ever.

THIS project pleas'd me much ; I had an hypocrite at my mercy, to punish as I thought proper, and I was to commence the world with eclat ; the practical part, however, I foresaw wou'd be attend-

ed with immense difficulties ; besides, I was not so mean-spirited as to harbour malice so long in my heart. I consider'd too, that to make such a cruel impertinent undertaking succeed, a superior merit was necessary, or at least an establish'd reputation, such as *Versac's*.

I BEGAN to think of an easier, and, at the same time, a more flattering revenge. I resolv'd to take no notice of my resentment to Madam *Lursay*, but to take all advantage of her fondness, and by the quickest inconsistency, by the foulest proceedings ever practis'd by successful lovers, to make her feel how much I despis'd her. This wicked project pleas'd me most, and seem'd surest of success ; I fix'd on it, and arriv'd at her house, hugging myself with the thoughts of so sweet a revenge, and determin'd that instant to put it in execution.

I EXPECTED, and not without reason, to find Madam *Lursay* alone ; but whether she was displeas'd with my behaviour at the former rendezvous, or that she had a mind to make me solicitous for more, she had resolv'd I shou'd be a prey to all the troublesome visitors my evil genius cou'd bring there that day. How greatly was I surpriz'd to behold *Versac's* coach in the yard ! I so little expected to meet him at Madam *Lursay's*, that I cou'd scarcely believe my own eyes ; yet, entering into her apartment, I discover'd the Count rather stretch'd on, than sitting in an arm-chair, pompously displaying before Madam *Lursay*, all his magnificence

ficence and gracefulness, and talking to her, with a moſt familiar air, in the moſt insolent manner.

THE better to impose on *Versac*, she receiv'd me with great coldness; but I might have perceiv'd, by the malicious smile my presence drew from him, he had seen into the motive of my visit. I sat down with that discountenanc'd air I seldom was free from, and which then, his presence augmented; for his part, he seem'd quite unconcern'd, and continuing his discourse:

You are certainly right, countess, said he; but, after all, I know not whether the loss is so much to be regretted. Constancy in love, to be sure, is a prodigious fine thing; but, when all's said, what does it lead to, — for two persons to be weary of one another for a vast while? I insist upon it, the heart ought never to be constrain'd. And, for my part, I am never so fond of changing, as when I see measures taking to tie me down. Oh! that I believe, answer'd Madam *Lursay*, but what wou'd you do, were you to see yourself first threaten'd with inconstancy? I shou'd change much the quicker. The disposition of your heart is, no doubt, a very amiable one, replied she. Madam, I am by no means singular: Like me, all men seek pleasure: fix pleasure eternally to the same object, and there you will fix us too. Believe me, Countess, there is no man wou'd engage even with the most charming creature, were it requir'd that he shou'd be attach'd to her for ever. So far from such a thing's being pro-

pos'd on either side, the very thoughts of such an eternity are banish'd, at least by every person of sense. Nothing's more common than to say, *we will love for ever*; but there are so many examples to prove there is no such thing in nature, that the generality of the world is no longer alarm'd at any disappointment of the kind, 'tis look'd upon to be no more than a gallant way of speaking, has no more efficacy, than a love sonnet, and never comes into question when the pleasures of inconstancy are in view. There is one thing which must ever surprize me, said Madam *Lursay*, and that is, how with those sentiments which you take so little pains to disguise, your perpetual treacheries, the indecency with which you carry on and break off an amour, there still shou'd be found women mad enough to think you amiable. Why then really, Madam, said *Verfat* very calmly; that does not in the least surprize me; but I shou'd wonder prodigiously were they not to admire us for failings, which we seldom have but out of regard to them. You say we are inconstant, pray, are they faithful? You pretend we break off indecently, a thing I never was aware of before, methought always the separation was as decent as the coming together. When things make a noise, the blame is not always to be laid at our door. Then I suppose, Sir, you think the women sometimes in fault. No doubt I do, answer'd he; if there be some women who with their weaknesses may be kept private, how many are there whose principal reason for loving is, that it may be known, and are themselves the first divulgers of it. But,

replied

replied Madam *Lurfay*, Madam de * * * * who lov'd you fo tenderly, and wifh'd fo earneftly her love fhould be a fecret to the whole world, was fhe the caufe of her own undoing? which of you blab'd it out? Neither fhe nor I, yet both of us together: She dreaded an eclat, I liften'd very ferioufly to the reasons fhe had for dreading one. But, fhall I tell you, there are eyes that can never be deceiv'd; in fpite of us, the world faw we lov'd, and as indifcreet as we were cautious, thought proper to publifh what they had feen; in vain I ftrove to fave appearances; I was believ'd in love, becaufe in reality I was fo, and this happens every day, Madam, to the beft disguis'd engagements. I imagine you are very much miftaken, Sir; for I myfelf know feveral examples to the contrary. Vain prefumption! refum'd *Verfac*; women conceit no one knows what they are carrying on, becaufe people are polite enough not to take notice in their prefence that their works are discover'd; but, God knows! how many converfations are held upon thefe affectionate intercourfes, fo fcrupuloufly conceal'd, and fo univerfally known! I do not pique myfelf upon being fharper, or more clear-fighted than other people; yet I affure you, nothing can efcape me. Why indeed, faid Madam *Lurfay* in a gibing tone, I am of two minds whether I fhall not believe you. Countefs, were you to know all I fee, you wou'd have a better opinion of my penetration. For example, not long ago, I was in company with one of thofe reasonable women, one of thofe fkilful women, whole inclinations lie buried under the moft

reserv'd countenance, who seem to have substituted wisdom and vertue to the irregularities of a past youth ; you conceive, Madam, added he, that there are such women in the world. But to proceed. I was sitting alone with a prude of this species, when her lover arriv'd ; she receiv'd him with great coldness, scarcely was he treated like a common acquaintance ; yet——the eyes spoke in spite of the will, the voice soften'd, the little man, an absolute novice, seem'd uneasy at his situation ; and I, whom nothing escap'd, got away as fast as I cou'd, to go and tell it to all the world.

IN finishing this speech, which threw me into the greatest perplexity, and even seem'd to discompose Madam *Lursay* with all her presence of mind, *Versac* rose to go away. What ! my lord, said Madam *Lursay*, so soon ? surely you don't intend to leave me, it is an age since I have seen you, I pray you stay. It is not in my power at present, Madam, you can scarcely conceive what a deal of business I have on my hands, it has almost turn'd my head ; but if your ladyship intends spending the evening at home, tho' it were to prejudice all the rest of the world, I will do myself the honour to wait on you. Madam *Lursay* consented with as much joy as if she did not really detest him : he departed.

THAT is, said Madam *Lursay*, as soon as we were alone, by much the most impertinent dangerous coxcomb, the most troublesome and worst-minded

minded creature, the whole court can produce. Since you know him to be ſuch, ſaid I, why do you ſee him? See him! replied ſhe, becauſe, were we only to ſee the perſons we eſteem, we ſhou'd ſee no-body; the leſs people of *Versac's* character are amiable in ſociety, the more pains muſt be taken to keep well with them: Whatever marks of friendſhip you ſhew them, they will rail at you; but if you break off with them abruptly, they'll tear you to pieces. *Versac* has no opinion of any body but himſelf, calumniates the whole world without ſhame, without diſcretion. A ſet of women, more inconſiſtent, more cried down, more deſpicable than himſelf, have brought him into vogue: He makes uſe of a particular jargon that dazzles every one; to the frivolous outſide of a petit-maitre, he has contriv'd to join the deciſive tone of a pedant; he knows nothing, yet judges of every thing; nevertheleſs he bears a great name. By eternally boaſting of his wit, he has perſuaded numbers to think he has ſome: His malice makes him fear'd; and becauſe all the world abhors him, all the world ſees him. Tho' Madam *Lurſay* employ'd all her ſkill in drawing this diſadvantageous picture of *Versac*, ſhe cou'd not perſuade me to think it reſembled him. To me *Versac* was the greateſt man in the world, and I attributed all the bitter things Madam *Lurſay* had ſaid of him to hatred, and perhaps diſappointment.

THIS conſideration rais'd my contempt to the higheſt. But, we were alone, ſhe look'd beautifully, and I knew ſhe was not inſenſible. Love and

respect had no longer any share in what I felt; my desires were the stronger. I repeated to myself, to give me more courage, all I had learn'd from *Versac*. I call'd to mind all she had done for me, and the more I grew ashamed of the part I had acted, the less I forgave her the ridicule I had drawn on myself. When she had finish'd *Versac*'s panegyrick, she began to look at me in so particular a manner, her eyes express'd something so very tender, that, had I not been burning with revenge, I believe she wou'd have lost nothing by it. I soon forgot how little her conquest was flattering, my youth prevented me from dwelling long on that consideration: At my then age, prejudice is too weak for opportunity; besides, to make what I desir'd her for, tasteful, it was of no consequence whether I esteem'd her or not.

I DREW near her without saying a word, then kiss'd her hand, but in such a manner as fill'd her at first with the highest expectations. Well, Sir, said she smiling, will you be wiser to day than you were yesterday? I believe I shall, Madam, answered I in a firm voice: the moments you are pleas'd to grant me are too precious not to be instantly employ'd, and I am very sensible you have reason to be displeas'd at my manner of employing them hitherto. What do you mean, Sir, by all this, said she pretending to be surpriz'd. I mean, answered I, that you shou'd love me, that you shou'd tell me you love me, that you shou'd give me proofs of your love. I pronounc'd these words with

with an intrepidity ſhe did not think me capable of the night before, and which indeed ſeem'd to her ſo much out of character, that ſhe never once thought of being offended. She answer'd me with a disdainful ſmile, which made me feel how little ſhe valued my pretentions, and how incapable ſhe thought I was of ſupporting them. Leſs wou'd provoke a man. Of a ſudden, I became ſo familiar, that Madam *Lurſay* was ſtunn'd, and to ſuch a degree that at firſt I met with little reſiſtance. In a maze ſhe found I was no longer impos'd on, and poſſibly had I properly aſſiſted the lucky moment, ſhe wou'd have given it no delay; but in the miſt of tranſports, which love alone ſhou'd authoriſe, I was ſo ſure of victory, I employ'd ſo little tendereſs, that at length ſhe was forced to ſhew her diſpleaſure. The bold determin'd manner in which I proceeded, was, no doubt, hurtful to my deſigns. Her eyes fill'd with real anger, but nothing made me deſiſt; perſuaded that inwardly ſhe wiſh'd to be overcome, in aſking pardon I continued to offend——but I cou'd obtain nothing, either becauſe Madam *Lurſay* had no mind to ſurrender as indecently as I wou'd have her, or that the little uſage I had had of women, made me leſs dangerous than I ſhou'd have been on ſuch an occaſion.

ASHAM'd of an enterprize that had ſucceeded ſo ill, I withdrew, greatly embarraſs'd about what I foreſaw ſhe was going to ſay to me. She, on her ſide, ſeem'd as perplex'd how ſhe ſhou'd behave in ſo critical a conjuncture. To ſhew me too much indulgence,

indulgence, what wou'd I not be at liberty to think ; to affect being extremely angry I might be discourag'd ; and the consequences, for the time to come, much to be dreaded. She remain'd then for a considerable time thoughtful and silent ; I follow'd her example. A man ever so little acquainted with the world, wou'd have said a thousand pretty things on the occasion to help a woman out ; but I was at an absolute loss, and Madam *Lursay* was forced to have recourse to her own ingenuity, or determine never to speak to me more. At length she came to a resolution ; which was to signify to me with dignity and tenderness, that she thought my proceedings very ridiculous. I pleaded love for my excuse ; She insisted love never made a man lose respect ; I, very respectfully, assur'd her of the contrary : We argued about it so long, that at last we lost sight of our argument ; and I put an end to the dispute by kissing her hand which she gave me, assuring me at the same time, she wou'd be more cautious with me for the future.

THIS menace did not frighten me much ; in the midst of her anger I cou'd perceive in her, a vast propensity to condescension : my revenge was only retarded ; and, very improperly, I imagin'd it was not right to be too pressing for the moments of its execution. Again we relaps'd into silence. Madam *Lursay*, who in my first transport had behav'd like a discreet woman, was intitled to hope for a second, and indeed seem'd to expect it : she was ignorant how I had come by all that sudden and surprizing knowledge ;

knowledge; and even in flattering herself it was owing to love, she must have been astonish'd to find it so circumscrib'd: all reflections made, she thought it wou'd not be amiss to afford me some of her assistance; resuming then the conversation, she ask'd me, but in the gentlest manner, how from an abundance of respect, from a respect too timid indeed, I cou'd, all at once, pass to a disobliging familiarity. For, in fine, added she, I allow there wou'd be nothing surprising in a man's failing in respect to a woman, if such a one can be found, whom the most amiable can prevail on merely from the strength of her own desires, and to whom every minute is critical; but I think I may venture to say, that is not my case: my way of thinking and deportment in life shou'd have protected me from certain attempts; yet you see, Sir, how much I have been mistaken.

EXASPERATED at such an impudent piece of hypocrisie, for I cou'd never think *Versac* had deceiv'd me, I made her no answer: to justify my contempt, and tell her the discourses on which it was founded, wou'd have been laying her under the necessity of re-establishing herself in my good opinion; the consequence of which perhaps wou'd be the loss of any future hopes of victory.

WHY do you not make me some answer? said she, are you afraid of saying too much in your own defence, or do you not think proper to make any? I knew not what to say, again I threw it all on love,

love, and the indulgences she had shewn me. As to love, replied she, I already told you that is not a reasonable excuse: and as to the indulgences you mention, I own, you have met with some; but there are of different sorts, and mine, I am confident, gave you no such right over me, as you presum'd to take. Had I even declar'd myself as openly as from your behaviour it might be imagin'd I had, a delicate lover wou'd not have taken the advantage, much less have abus'd it in the manner you have done. She added several fine sentiments on the subject, then concluded by hinting to me, the necessity of *gradations*. The meaning of this word, nay, the word itself, was unknown to me: I took the liberty to tell Madam *Lursay* as much, she laughing at my simplicity, was pleas'd to be at the trouble of instructing me. I put each precept in practice, as fast as she deliver'd them, and the important doctrine of gradations might have carried us great lengths, had we not heard a noise in the anti-chamber, which put a stop to our proceedings.

WORD was brought, — Madam and Miss *Theville*. I was perfectly well acquainted with the name. Madam *Theville* and my Mother were near relations, but on bad terms for some time past, and Madam *Theville* having liv'd mostly in the country, I had never had an opportunity of seeing her. What surprise cou'd equal mine when I beheld in Miss *Theville*, that unknown whom I so much ador'd, and who, I imagin'd, had such an aversion to me. At sight of her, a disorder not to

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be describ'd, diffus'd itfelf thro' all my fenfes; love, fear and transport reviv'd alternately in my breast. Madam *Lurfay* fhew'd her great marks of fondnefs and attention; and I judg'd by her behaviour to Madam *Theville*, that a ftrict friendship fubfifted between them. This furpris'd me the more, that not only I had never before met Madam *Theville* at Madam *Lurfay*'s, but had never fo much as heard the latter mention her name. Madam *Lurfay* reproach'd her with having been fo long without feeing her. You may eafily believe, Madam, faid Madam *Theville*, that nothing but bufinefs of great confequence cou'd have prevented my having the pleafure of waiting on you; I ftay'd but a fhort time in *Paris* when I faw you laft, and am now but a few days from the country, to which I was oblig'd to go, and where I fhou'd have remain'd longer, had it been lefs tirefome to *Hortenfia*.

How miserable was I to find by Madam *Theville*, that the place in which I did not feek for my unknown, was the only one in which I fhou'd have found her; and that, by obftinately flying Madam *Lurfay*, I had loft every opportunity of being near *Hortenfia*. During thefe melancholy reflections I never ceas'd gazing on her, and now, gave up myfelf entirely to the paffion with which fhe had infpired me. Madam *Lurfay* prefented me by name to Madam *Theville*, who fpoke obligingly to me, but with a ferious air, which perhaps fhe put on, on account of the coldnefs between her and my Mother. If I was not over pleafing to her, fhe on
her

her side did not make the most agreeable impression on me. Tolerably handsome still, but with a very haughty aspect, unpromising of much sweetness in her temper; she was, they said, a very virtuous woman, and what made her more esteemed, she was virtuous without ostentation, had always been so, and never imagin'd that her character of virtue intitled her to speak ill of any body; but with all this, very little adapted to the world, in her contempt of which, she was too careless of making herself agreeable: she indeed commanded respect, every body admir'd her, but nobody lov'd her. As for Miss *Theville*, she look'd at me, I thought, with great indifference, and scarcely vouchsafed an answer to a compliment I paid her. 'Tis true, I have since consider'd, 'twas very possible she did not understand me: the disorder of my senses had pass'd to my very brain, a multiplicity of confus'd ideas hinder'd me from expressing properly any particular one. The cold looks of the daughter piqued me more than those of the mother. Pensive, and as if my presence incommoded her, I met with nothing in her eyes but melancholy and inattention. Her mother and Madam *Lursay* who were conversing together, gave us an opportunity of doing the same; but I was too sensibly affected with the pleasure of being near her, to think of talking of any thing to her but of my love, and nothing at that instant authorised such an avowal. Besides, what had pass'd between us at the *Thuilleries*, the indifference with which she now seem'd to see me, that secret passion I suspected her of from her own words, every thing

thing contributed to conſtrain me. In vain I ſtrove to begin a converſation, the gloomy thoughtfulness in which ſhe was plung'd, increas'd my timidity. What! ſaid I to myſelf, was I vain enough to think I was the perſon who had touch'd her heart, that her dangerous unknown cou'd be nobody but me! What aſſurance! How I deceiv'd myſelf! With what indifference, with what odious diſdain does ſhe receive me! Alas! that unknown, whoever he be, is no longer ignorant of his happineſs: mutually proteſting love, their hearts entangled in delights, they enjoy each other without fear, without conſtraint; whiſt I, nourishing in grief all the pangs of unfortunate love, am for ever depriv'd of the leaſt dawn of comfortable hope! What cruel fate can have ordain'd, that her hatred ſhou'd begin, when my paſſion is at its higheſt pitch?

THESE dreadful reflections oppreſs'd me, but brought me no cure. I was ſtill ſinking under them, when word was brought——Madam Senanges. Buried in melancholy, I ſcarcely perceiv'd her entering into the room. Not ſo was it with her, ſhe caught me at once, her eyes had walk'd over my whole perſon before I had taken the leaſt notice of her's.

VERSAC, whom I have juſt left, ſaid ſhe to Madam *Lurſay*, tells me you intend ſpending the evening at home, an opportunity I gladly embrace, you are not diſpleas'd to ſee me, my dear, am not I right? And did not he tell you too, ſaid Madam *Lurſay*,

Lursay, that a thousand times I have reproach'd you for never coming near me? He's a mere rattle, replied she, a giddy-pate, not a syllable from you upon my honour; but prithee tell me, my princess, what is become of you? Why are you no where to be found?

DURING these compliments as false as insipid, Madam *Senanges* look'd at me with complaisance. She embrac'd Madam *Theville* whom, she said, she was delighted to see again, and scolded her for having buried herself so long in the country: She prais'd *Hortensia*'s charms, but in the stile of a woman who took no sort of pleasure in them: The encomium was short and dry, and spoken with an unconcern'd imperious air. She said nothing to me of my figure, but her eyes were eternally on it, and I believe, had she thought it consistent with good manners, to have complimented me thereon, she wou'd have been more sincere, and ran into greater divisions than when Miss *Theville* was the subject of her commendations. Her eyes were fix'd on me all the time she was speaking to me; their expression was so easily to be understood, that, with all my ignorance, 'twas impossible for me to mistake their meaning.

MADAM *Senanges*, to whom, as will appear in the sequel, I had the misfortune of owing part of my education, was one of those female philosophers who never regard what the world can say; who are even above prejudice, and always stooping to every thing

thing low; more known in the world by their vices than their rank; who only pride themſelves on their quality, becauſe it ſeems to countenance their moſt ridiculous caprices, and abject fancies; always ready at the excuſe of a critical minute, the name of which, tho' in reality they never experienc'd it's force, they wou'd willingly give to every opportunity; as void of paſſion, as loſt in character, complying with inſenſibility, eternally yielding to the idea of a pleaſure that flies them eternally; of that ſect, in fine, was ſhe, which is never either to be excus'd or compaſſionated.

MADAM *Senanges* had been a pretty woman, but now her features were all decay'd: Her eyes languid and ſunk, had neither force nor luſtre: the paint, which only ſerv'd to dry up the ſad remains of her beauty, the extravagance of her dreſs, her immodeſt deportment, all contributed to make her more inſupportable: in fine, ſhe was a woman who of all her former attractions, had preserv'd none except that indecent forwardneſs, ſcarcely pardonable in youth and agreeableneſs, to which ſhe had no pretenſions; but that, in an advanc'd age, preſents to the ſight an hideous picture not to be look'd upon but with deteſtation.

As to wit, ſhe had ſome, I mean that ſort of wit ſo commonly met with in the world: there was nothing in what ſhe ſaid, but there was nothing ſhe wou'd not ſay; ſhe ſlander'd perpetually, and never thinking well, was never afraid of telling what ſhe thought. A compleat miſtreſs of moſt of thoſe
careleſs

careless, fantastical, new or renew'd turns of court, which she help'd out with a supine drawling tone; negligence affected, sometimes mistaken for natural, but, in my mind, only a slower way of becoming tiresome. Notwithstanding all these rare talents for the frivolous, she now and then made a digression, wou'd dispute obstinately, and without discernment or knowledge venture to give her judgment; finally, stuff'd with sentiment and probity, in seeming amaze at the depravity of the age, she most cordially lamented its follies.

THE venerable Madam *Senanges*, such as I have describ'd her, cou'd not help being smitten with my person. That moment, which with her, decided the greatest events in love; that unhappy moment, which she cou'd never guard against, because, as she said herself, it was impossible to resist it, hurried her away, and made her my captive. Not that I had precisely (as she has since told me) every qualification necessary to please her: I had too great a sameness in my deportment, I had neither oddities in speech, or ridiculousness in manners, I seem'd ignorant of my own merit; but at the same time, she was sensible of all the perfections I wanted, she flatter'd herself with having soon the glory of making me acquire them; in short, she took it into her head to form me: a fashionable expression, conveying a multiplicity of ideas difficult to be explain'd.

WHEN I examin'd Madam *Senanges*, I cou'd hardly think she ever cou'd have the forming of me. Notwithstanding all her obliging looks, I took
her

her at firft for nothing better than a decay'd flatter'd coquet, whose forwardnefs was fhockingly difagreeable. As yet I entertain'd thofe principles of modefty, and that relifh for decency which in the world pafs for bashfulnefs and folly, for this reafon were they to be admitted into the rank of virtues and agreeable qualities, too many wou'd have reafon to be afhamed of having no right to make any fort of claim to them.

I KNOW not whether Madam *Senanges* was aware of the uneafinefs her inticing looks gave me; but ſhe afforded me no quarter. To make me thoroughly fenfible how glorious a conqueſt I had made, all her gracefulness, all her negligent airs were display'd, and the ridiculousnefs of her perfon join'd to that of her converſation. I began at laſt to be angry with myſelf for giving ſo much attention to a woman who was ſo willing to ſhew herſelf at once; and in ſpite of all Miſs *Theville's* coldnefs, I fought in her eyes for a counter-poifon to Madam *Senanges's*. Miſs *Theville* was liſtning to her; and I cou'd perceive by her bluſhes and diſdainful air, ſhe thought of her as I did; I was by no means ſurpriz'd. With aſtoniſhment I reflected on the prodigious difference between her and Madam *Senanges*; on thoſe ſweet engaging charms, that noble deportment, reſerv'd without constraint, and which alone wou'd have made her reſpected; on that juſtnefs and accuracy of underſtanding, in mirth diſcreet, unaffected in the ſerious, proper in every thing. On the other ſide nothing was to be ſeen but

but what the most perverse nature and unjustifiable art cou'd produce most fordid and corrupt.

MADAM *Senanges*, who to satisfy herself of her own merit thought more of the number of her admirers, than of the time they had spent in her service, was fully persuaded her charms had had the desir'd effect upon me, and that, before we parted, I shou'd make her a declaration in form.

THIS idea was making her fulsomely spritely, when *Versac*, whose clatter proclaim'd him from far, enter'd, follow'd by the Marquis of *Pranzy*, a man in vogue, a disciple and everlasting copier of *Versac*. At sight of *Pranzy*, Madam *Lursay* blush'd, and receiv'd him with an embarrass'd countenance. *Versac*, who had foreseen what wou'd happen, pretended not to observe the uneasiness *Pranzy*'s visit gave Madam *Lursay*; he took no notice at first of any body but *Senanges*, and pretending to be greatly surpriz'd: She here! said he looking at Madam *Lursay*, she here! I must surely be mistaken! She ask'd him what he meant. O! nothing replied *Versac*, lowering his voice, 'twas only a silly thought of mine, that when one has a person in whom one takes an interest, Madam *Senanges* is not the woman he is to be shewn to. I know no body here, said Madam *Lursay*, that can have any thing to fear from her. Probably enough, replied *Versac* very composedly, and there's where I was mistaken.

VERSAC

VERSAC had no love for Madam *Lurfay*, and wou'd certainly have attack'd her more furiously, had not Mifs *Theville* whom he then espied, given him something else to think of. Dazzled with her brightness, he seem'd surpriz'd how so much beauty cou'd have remain'd so long conceal'd from him; he gaz'd on her with admiration and amaze painted in his looks. He saluted Madam *Theville* and *Hortensia* in a more respectful manner than was usual with him. Then, these politenesses over, what angel, said he whispering Madam *Lurfay*, what divinity have you got here? What eyes! What dignity! What a graceful mein! How is it possible I have never till now seen the compleatest beauty my eyes ever beheld? Madam *Lurfay* whisper'd him who she was. Admire her as much as you please; added she, but I advise you not to fall in love with her. And for what reason, replied he. Because in all probability you wou'd not succeed. By heavens! I shou'd be curious to find that; then resuming the conversation: Madam, said he aloud, I flatter myself you will not take amiss my bringing *Pranzi* to see you. He's your old acquaintance, your old friend, such are always receiv'd with pleasure, is it not true? When one has seen a person, as I may say, grow under one's eyes, when one has introduc'd him into the world, let him absent himself ever so long it signifies nothing, we have always an interest in what concerns him, and are charm'd to see him again. Sir, he does me a great deal of honour, said Madam *Lurfay* with a constrain'd

strain'd air. You'll scarcely then believe, what pains I took to bring him hither, he was loth, he said, to come, because it was so many years since he had paid you his respects, a ridiculous scruple: for where there has been such an intimacy, all those frivolous ceremonies shou'd be laid aside,

VERSAC's malicious gibing air, and Madam *Lursay*'s vast uneasiness surpriz'd me at first, who was not in the secret. I was ignorant, that ten years before, the world had given *Pranzy* to Madam *Lursay*, and that in all probability she had accepted of him. She had certainly been in the right to disown she had ever made such a choice, for if the heart of a woman be to be judg'd by the object of her passion, nothing surely cou'd make Madam *Lursay* more contemptible than her taste for *Pranzy*.

WITH few or no pretensions to nobility, he had that conceit of his family, unpardonable even in persons of the highest rank, and teaz'd you eternally with the shortest genealogy at court. Along with this, he wanted to pass for a man of courage, but an affair or two, not much redounding to his honour, had put a stop to his boasting of his valour in all places. Disagreeable in figure as well as mind, and very needy, the caprice, however, of women, and the protection of *Versac*, had set him up for a man of gallantry, tho' to compleat the vileness of his character, he was so mean-spirited as to plunder the women from whom he receiv'd favours. Silly,
impudent

impudent, affuming, as incapable of thinking right as of being afham'd of thinking wrong, had he not been a fop, which, no doubt, is being something confiderable, 'twou'd have been wonderful how he ever came to please.

THO' Madam *Lurfay* had not endeavour'd to conceal her weaknefs, cou'd ſhe, without horror, reflect that *Pranxi* had once been dear to her. But in all appearance that was not what had made her chiefly diſlike his preſence; *Versac's* malice, the bitter things he had already ſaid to her at his firſt viſit, and the reaſons ſhe had given him to be angry with her, made her tremble for what might be yet to come. She doubted not but her love for me was no ſecret to him, that he intended to publiſh it to the whole world, and even endeavour perhaps to deſtroy her in my good opinion. *Versac* was one of thoſe men who are no more to be ſilenc'd than intruſted with a ſecret. Let her have behav'd as ſhe wou'd with regard to me, ſhe knew he was neither to be deceiv'd, nor wheedled into diſcretion. So terrible a ſituation plung'd her into a melancholy viſible to the whole company, and *Versac's* remarks on her and *Pranxi*, threw her into the greateſt confuſion. I ſaw her bluſh without attempting to juſtify herſelf; I concluded inſtantly, from her ſilence and dejected countenance, there was no doubt but *Pranxi* was one of my predeceſſors.

VERSAC no ſooner perceiv'd how much Madam *Lurfay* was affected, but he reſolv'd, redoub-
F
ling

ling his attacks. Continuing then the discourse: Can you guess, Madam said he, out of what a scrape I have brought *Pranzi*, and where the poor soul was going to pass his evening.——Prithee leave off *Versac*, interrupted *Pranzi*; Madam *Lursay*, added he in a gibing tone, is sensible how much I love and respect her. I have a very grateful remembrance of past favours, and shou'd have made no objection where the pleasure of waiting on her was concern'd, cou'd I again hope to be restor'd to them. Perfectly polite, said *Versac*, and by no means contradictory to what I was going to say: Upon my word, he was going to sup tête à tête with old Madam *D*****. My God! cried Madam *Senanges*, is this true, *Pranzi*? Oh horrible! with Madam *D*****? Why 'tis an hundred years old! True, Madam, said *Versac*, but what does he care for that; for ought I know, he may think her too young; however, be that as it will, I and some others are not ignorant, that at near fifty there was not much difficulty to please him.

DURING this impertinent conversation, *Versac* never ceas'd looking at Miss *Theville*, and with so much attention, that I began to tremble at last. The notions I had form'd to myself of this great man, were sufficient grounds for my fears: I imagin'd that neither vertue, or prior engagements were sufficient to stand against him; he thought directly as I did. Not a moment did he doubt, notwithstanding Madam *Lursay*'s prediction, of seducing Miss *Theville*; but she had heard so many bad things of him,

him, that abſtracted from her vertuous diſpoſition, he found her abſolutely prepoſſeſs'd againſt him. He perceiv'd ſhe was inſenſible to the language of the eyes, and no ways dazzled with his perſon ; this ſurpriz'd him. Born to be victorious over women, honour'd with ſo many triumphs, and, in his way, the greateſt of conquerors ; he cou'd not conceive how it was poſſible any heart ſhou'd eſcape him ; but if Miſs *Theville's* had not been fill'd with the moſt ſincere paſſion, it was vertuous : a quality *Versac* was ſo unaccuſtom'd to meet with, that he hardly believ'd there was ſuch a thing in nature.

HOWEVER, Miſs *Theville's* indifference did not abſolutely diſcourage him, he knew ſhe was a maid ; a troubleſome title, which obliges thoſe who bear it, to diſſemble their inclinations more than married women, whom the uſage of the world, cuſtom, and example render leſs timorous : beſides, ſhe was in the preſence of her mother, and a mother too, whoſe ſevere reſerv'd countenance conſtrain'd her, and kept her in awe. Theſe reflections, which probably he made, afforded him ſome comfort. Like *Madam Senanges*, he counted before he left the place, upon ſettling matters to his ſatisfaction ; ſtill he was aſham'd within himſelf of the reſpite he was forced to grant her. The ſooner to find out what he had to depend on, all his charms were diſplay'd : he had very handſome legs, he did all he cou'd to make them be obſerv'd ; he laugh'd, as often as he found an opportunity, in order to ſhew the whiteness and regularity of his teeth ; in ſhort, he had

recourse to all his most tempting and engaging looks, and placed himself in every attitude that can set off the person to the greatest advantage.

ALARM'D at the designs of a man, whom I thought it ridiculous to resist, and beginning as non-sensically to have a bad, as a little before I had a good opinion of women, I closely examin'd Miss *Theville*; she look'd at him with remarkable coldness, and indeed a sort of contempt, which gave some ease to my mind. As for *Pranzi* who took it into his head to shew her some marks of his attention, she did not so much as deign to let him see she had taken notice he was in the room.

VERSAC was scarcely seated, when Madam *Senanges* who talk'd the more for not knowing what to say, began to question him. May I be inform'd, said she, from whence comes *Versac*? To what divine amusements had he consecrated his hours? What happy fair one has this whole day possess'd our hero? You ask me so many things at once, reply'd *Versac*, I doubt whether I shall be able to resolve you about any. Good God! cried she, he's grown discreet: only think Madam, he wo'nt tell us a word of what he has been doing to day, I'm amaz'd! I can't conceive what's the matter with him! my sweet Count, do, tell us something, positively we'll keep your secret. A fine method truly, said Madam *Lursay*, to get any thing out of him! no, my Lord, give her an opportunity, and I'H

I'll engage the whole town fhall know to-morrow what you communicate to her to night.

REALLY, Ladies, you talk of my difcretion, as a matter of no concern to you both ! yet you know there are things of which I never fpoke ; I think I fhould be thank'd with a little more civility. And pray for what ? faid the intrepid Madam Senanges. Proceed, replied *Versac* with a malicious fmile, fo much courage becomes you extremely. Madam Senanges tho' very inconfiderate, knew *Versac*, and dreading to put his difcretion to trial, ask'd him whereabouts he was with a certain lady whom ſhe nam'd. Who me ? Madam, I know her not. A great myſtery truly ! when all the town knows you are paſſionately in love with her. 'Tis falſe ; the town that ſeems to know every thing, muſt give me leave to know more of that matter than they do. The truth is, this lady, whom I ſcarcely know by fight, has taken it into her head, I know not why, that I ſhall love her one day, and in the mean time goes about telling all the world, we are in the greateſt intimacy. This impertinent ſtory has gain'd ſuch credit, that, if it continues for ever ſo little a time longer, I ſhall beg of that lady, and very ſeriouſly too, to give herſelf no longer the air of making me ridiculous. But I ſhould imagine, ſaid Madam *Lurſay*, ſhe is in more danger of making herſelf ſo than you. Lord ! Madam, 'tis plain you are not aware of the conſequences that wou'd attend a diſcuſſion of that matter. But ſhe's handſome, ſaid Madam Senanges. Yes—ſhe is handſome,

some, said *Pranzi*, 'tis true, but she's obscure, a mere child of fortune, of no birth, is unworthy the attentions of a man of any figure; for of all things, persons of rank shou'd keep up to their dignity: A courtier whose time hangs heaviest on his hands, who is even over head and ears in debt, wou'd justly be blam'd for having made such a choice. I love *Pranzi*, said *Versac* ironically, he has quite a noble way of thinking, those creatures are certainly born for our destruction, and when a man, like him, engages without intending to be the poorer for it, such women shou'd not be allow'd to raise a reputation at our expence. 'Twou'd certainly be very wrong, said Madam *Lursay*, and you have open'd my eyes, Sir. By heavens! resum'd *Versac* with some indignation, it is prodigious how these middling sort of creatures persecute us! we are not even sure of the secret with them: as they only seek us out of vanity, scarcely are we come to the first parleys, when the affair is made as publick as if there were really something in it for us to glory in. I am surpriz'd, said Madam *Lursay*, that you, who never knew how to hold your tongue, shou'd complain of an indiscretion in others, which you are so guilty of. Countess, you are sensible of the contrary; nay, you were privy to an affair of mine which I did keep secret, and that I sincerely wish'd you had spoke as little of as I. Upon my word, you had before play'd me so many malicious tricks, you might very well have spared me this last.

VERSAC,

VERSAC, who only came to Madam *Lurfay*'s to have the pleasure of mortifying her, wou'd not have neglected this opportunity, had not word been brought——supper was serv'd. Still determin'd to persecute her, he began by giving notice in a whisper to *Senanges*, whose intentions he perceiv'd, that Madam *Lurfay* had designs upon me: he knew the use she wou'd make of this caution, at least that it wou'd make her much more anxious to please me. Nor did he rest there, *Pranxi* was directed to use Madam *Lurfay* familiarly, and to omit nothing, within the bounds of modesty, that cou'd help to convince me she had formerly receiv'd him kindly.

WE sat down to supper; in vain I strove to place myself near Miss *Theville*, or at least to be at a distance from Madam *Senanges*, but I cou'd no more obtain the one, than avoid the other. *Senanges* had so contriv'd matters, that with an air of authority she plac'd me between herself and *Versac*, who had likewise a great mind to sit by Miss *Theville*, but her Mother and Madam *Lurfay*, took care to keep her from him.

THE wit commonly made use of in the world, whatever people may think, is very much circumscrib'd; that charming dialect peculiarly attributed to good company, is often no more than the language of ignorance, conceit and affectation. Such was our supper-conversation: *Senanges* and *Pranxi* talk'd

incessantly, those of the company that had sense, were rarely allow'd to shew it, we were depriv'd too, of a good deal of *Versac's* humour.

MADAM *Senanges* was not so entirely taken up with her nonsense, but she wou'd find time to assure me, by her constant leers, of her unbounded willingness to please me; the indiscreet manner in which she pursued this point, was either owing to her having acquired such a habit of forwardness that she cou'd not help it, or that she had infinite pleasure in tormenting Madam *Lursay*, who, I perceiv'd, was not pleas'd with her advances, and perhaps dislik'd them the more to see me so foolish as not absolutely to reject them. Not but that I was very much prejudic'd against Madam *Senanges*, but like all men in the world, I was flatter'd by an additional conquest, tho' ever so despicable: Besides, I thought by this means to be reveng'd of Miss *Theville*, whom I now affected to look at with as much indifference as I imagin'd she had shewn me.

WHILST I was attentive to Madam *Senanges's* ridiculous conversation, Miss *Theville* seem'd buried in thought. Now and then she cast her eyes on me, and sometimes with a sort of contempt which I did not interpret in my favour; my pique to her on this account encreas'd every moment: All the consolation I had was, that she still persisted in slighting *Versac*, who was out of his wits at so unexpected an event. Madam *Lursay*, jealous to distraction of *Senanges*, tormented with *Pranzy's* familiar, equivocal,

vocal, indecent expreffions, was, in fpite of all her care, plung'd in the deepeft melancholy : the dread of lofing me, her reputation cruelly expos'd, and in the hands of two rafh, inconfiderate men, who, fhe faw were confpired againft her, and whom fhe was forc'd to manage with all the art fhe was capable of ; cou'd there be a more terrible fituation ?

THE converfation never inclin'd to fcandal, but fhe dreading to become the fubject, inflantly employ'd all her fkill to divert it ; but that was no eafy matter with *Versac* : The misfortune of not pleafing Mifs *Theville* had put him out of humour, and the whole fex was to fuffer for it.

HAVE you heard, faid he, of the behaviour of Madam de ****, and can you conceive a more extraordinary one ? At her age, after having twice taken to devotion, now to take up with little D***. There is fomething very whimfical in it, faid Madam *Senanges*, and at the fame time very abfurd and ridiculous ; for when a perfon retires from the world in fo conspicuous a manner, the re-entry fhould be made with a more ferious adventure. Let her have return'd with whom fhe pleas'd, faid Madam *Theville*, I don't think fhe wou'd have been the lefs to blame. I afk your pardon, Madam, faid *Versac*, on thefe occafions the choice is of great importance. Sometimes it is lefs blameable, with a magiftrate than a colonel ; to a prude, for example, the firft is more becoming than the laft ; but at fifty to pick up a young man, is adding to the ridiculousnefs

lousness of the passion that of the object. And those things happen, said *Senanges*, when women have not spirit enough to keep up to their dignity. Very true, said *Versac* ironically, and looking full at her, many such there are, and indeed women—— Come Sir, no general rules, interrupted she, they are always offensive. I think quite otherwise, replied he, general rules shou'd never give offence. What! resum'd she, if, for example, you say all women are easily overcome, when you impute to the sex in general, irregularities which a few only are capable of, do you think the whole sex have not a right to be offended? I certainly think they have not, answered he; nay more; I believe that they who are on the point of surrendering, are the only women who cannot bear to hear those things said, and are always the first to complain. I am certainly of your mind, said *Madam Theville*: A wise woman shou'd never take to herself, what is said of one who is not so; provided I can keep myself from yielding, I shall never be uneasy it shou'd be said no woman can resist. Then you look upon the opinion such discourses give of us as nothing, said *Madam Lursay*? Yes——added *Senanges*, and that, upon so false a principle, a man, by only looking at us, thinks us subdued! Alas! *Madam*, said *Versac*, there are unfortunately so many and such frequent examples of what you seem to apprehend, that there wou'd be much more simplicity in not thinking it, than impertinence in believing it.

AND

AND of what conſequence is it, you ſhou'd be thought ſubdued, if in reality you are not ſo? ſaid Madam *Theville*; how can your virtue ſuffer by the bad opinion of a fop? Believe me, Madam, a man who has liv'd ever ſo little a time in the world, ſoon finds out that women are neither all vicious, nor all virtuous, and experience eaſily teaches him to make a difference. Even ſuppoſing this to be true, ſaid Madam *Lurſay*, are we the leſs expoſ'd to the ridiculous notions of young men, who until they acquire that uſage and experience of the world, are ſure to begin by thinking ill of us all? And who ſometimes, replied *Verſac*, with that uſage and experience find nothing to undeceive them. Really Sir, ſaid *Senanges*, you talk like one who never kept any thing but bad company!

BEFORE I answer you, Madam, I ſhall be oblig'd to you, if you will tell me what bad company is? Why, a certain ſpecies of women, answer'd ſhe. You muſt allow, replied he, your definition is not juſt, ſince by making uſe of your own words I can convey a contrary idea, and tell you that women of a certain ſpecies, are the women who conſtitute good company; but let us explain your meaning: What do you underſtand by women who compoſe good company? Is it merely the virtuous part of the ſex, women who have never had the leaſt weakneſs to reproach themſelves? Undoubtedly, replied ſhe. What! wou'd you rank a woman noted for proſtitution, with her who had never made but one
false

false step; which a generous way of thinking, and an after-irreproachable behaviour, may have render'd worthy of some regard? Madam, I am not so cruel! those are not what I shou'd call bad company, and if you think them so, I must own I don't know what is good company, since of all the women I frequent, I know but few that have been always insensible. Were the number ever so great you wou'd not believe it, said Madam *Lursay*, and in general you think so ill of us all. — True, Madam, interrupted he, there are women whom it is impossible for me to think worse of, whose practices I look upon with contempt, and who, in fine, have no one virtue to recommend them; who are not weak, but vicious; always the first to cry out against what is said of the sex, because they have their own private, to screen under the general interest: To such, no doubt the last reflection is injurious; they are so sensible how much they lose by being known, that every thing becomes insupportable that unmasks and points them out. Thus, were I to say, women quickly surrender, scarcely do they wait for sollicitation, if I draw a disadvantageous picture of some, sure, I am at liberty to think that they, who rise up against it, find it resembles them. You are certainly right, Sir, said Madam *Theville*; to take those things so much to heart, is proving a bad opinion of one's self.

Will! Madam, said *Versar* to Madam *Senanger* who was ogling me, do you now conceive why so many women are angry, and Madam *Theville* is not. All I conceive, answered she, is, that it be-
comes

comes you lefs than any man to fpeak ill of women, and the ftrongeft inftance of their folly and ridiculousnefs is, their receiving you fo well as they do. And that perhaps is the very reafon, faid he laughing, why I have fo bad an opinion of them. But what exafperates me, refum'd *Senanges*, is, that this air of defpifing women is become a fafhion; authors themfelves have taken it up. Not long ago, I chanced to meet with I know not what, an execrable pamphlet, in which we were moft scandaloufly abus'd; with indignation I flung it away. Indeed, faid Madam *Lurfay*, thofe mischievous little books fhould be forbid. For what reafon, Madam, faid *Versac*? women purfue their own inclinations, and the author writes of them what he thinks they deferve: He abufes them, they abufe his book; they do not mend, nor he neither: fo far you are on a level.

WITH this conclufion we rofe from table, *Versac* beginning to doubt the fuccefs of his project, Madam *Senanges* abfolutely bent on carrying on hers, and Madam *Lurfay* diftracted at *Pranxi's* rude, indecent behaviour, who prefs'd her pretty loudly to reftore him to favours which, he faid, were now become more neceffary to him than ever. How cruelly foever ſhe was mortified by ſuch difcourfes, they afflicted her not near ſo much as to fee me ſo clofely engag'd with *Senanges*, on whom, in ſpite of the command ſhe had over herſelf, ſhe cou'd not help every now and then caſting an eye of indignation and contempt. She had heard her
talking

talking tenderly to me whilst we were at supper, and complaining that, tho' the greatest persons in *France* frequented her house, I had not yet thought of presenting myself there. Madam *Lursay* was too well acquainted with Madam *Senanges*, not to know that the most trifling compliments from her comprehended the deepest designs: She had asked me too many questions concerning the situation of my heart, for her to be so curious and indifferent too. *Senanges* was of a hasty temper, stopt at nothing when a new conquest was in view, endeavour'd less to soften than to please, and willingly dispens'd both with love and esteem, provided she created desires, of which Madam *Lursay* knew all young men were very susceptible; and, tho' she imagin'd me very much in love with herself, she doubted not but I shou'd yield, at least when a fair opportunity offer'd, to a woman who, were I ever so backward, wou'd take care to point it out to me, and make me return to it more than once. The indifference I had shewn her since I had begun to fail in respect, my complaisance for Madam *Senanges*, every thing made her fear I was just on the point of deserting her. However impatient she was to know my thoughts, she did not dare to enquire into them. With so many persons about her, some of whom she justly suspected of having a watchful eye over her, it was impossible for her to come to any explanation, or settle another rendezvous. Besides, after what had pass'd between us, how cou'd she offer one without exposing herself to the severest judgment I cou'd possibly form of her? Happily for me,
decency

decency prevail'd. Madam *Senanges*, who was not quite fo scrupulous, and who plainly faw I was of no ufe to myfelf; that her moft expreffive looks were thrown away upon me, that I had only answer'd with bows, the kind invitation ſhe had given me to her houſe; was at an abſolute loſs how to make me comprehend what ſhe had ſo fully expreſs'd. To bring me over, there was but a word wanting, which, however indecent, ſhe did not venture to pronounce, either becauſe I did not preſs her to it, or, what is as likely, ſhe was ignorant of the neceſſity there was for the cleareſt explanation with me.

WE had talk'd over every thing at ſupper that was new with regard to ſcandal; without which, it is difficult to keep up converſation, and there was no thinking of treating of graver matters before *Senanges* and *Versac*. We were ſoon at a loſs what to ſay. Madam *Lurfay*, whom *Pranzi* ſtill continued to torment, propos'd to play; every body conſented, but I in particular, who was then in hopes of getting near Miſs *Theville*. However, fortune was not ſo favourable as I cou'd have wiſh'd. Madam *Lurfay* was too ſenſible of *Versac*'s ill nature to leave herſelf expos'd to it more than needs muſt; to avoid him as much as ſhe cou'd, ſhe made him make Madam *Theville*'s party with *Senanges* and me, and ſat herſelf to ombre with *Hortenfia* and *Pranzi*. I was ſo vex'd at this diſappointment, that I was juſt going to break up the party I had accepted of; but to make me ſome amends, I plac'd

ced myself in such a manner, that I had a full view of Miss *Theville*. In extasie to behold her, I knew not one moment what I was doing: All my attention was fix'd on her, I minded nothing but her motions. Sometimes our eyes met, it seem'd as if we were both equally interested in finding out what was passing in our souls. The melancholy in which I saw her plung'd, made me melancholy too, the many reflections it occasion'd, made me so inattentive, that *Versac*, who imagin'd Madam *Lursay* was running in my head, cou'd not forbear laughing, and making *Senanges* take notice of me, she, in pity, shrug'd up her shoulders, but without abating in the least the hopes she had establish'd on my person. Our game was not interesting enough to keep us silent. *Senanges* and *Versac*, every now and then gave a loose to their slanderous humour, which join'd with my inattention, tired Madam *Theville*'s patience, who lov'd play like a woman that loves nothing else. *Versac* hum'd part of a new and very satyrical lampoon. *Senanges*, who lov'd calumny in all shapes, ask'd it of him; he answer'd her, he was so unfortunate as only to know a few verses here and there.

I HAVE the whole song, Madam, said I, and that instant offer'd it to her. She very politely refus'd, and only beg'd I wou'd let her have a copy. I promis'd to send it to her the next morning. Send it! said *Versac*, seemingly surpriz'd; you know not what you are saying: can't you see plainly, added he whispering me, she never wou'd have ask'd you
for

for it, but in hopes you wou'd be your own meffenger? That's the method, is it not, Said he to *Senanges*, thofe trifles we always carry ourfelves? 'tis the politest way, no doubt, answered ſhe ſmiling, but I ſhou'd be very ſorry to conſtrain him. I eaſily perceiv'd by this puſh, that Madam *Senanges* wiſh'd to be more intimate with me, but thinking it impoſſible to avoid waiting on her, without being guilty of the greateſt piece of rudeneſs, I ſubmitted to *Verſac*'s deciſion, and told her, I wou'd be ſure to wait on her the next day, and bring her the verſes ſhe wanted, ſince ſhe was ſo kind as to give me leave. She ſeem'd delighted at this promiſe, and *Verſac*, who found himſelf in ſo fair a way of tormenting Madam *Lurſay*, was, I believe, ſtill more charm'd than *Senanges*.

IN a ſhort time after our parties were finiſh'd, to the great ſatisfaction of Madam *Lurſay*, who the better to blind *Verſac*, had condemn'd herſelf not only to play with a man ſhe deteſted, but to ſee me expos'd to the ſollicitations of a woman who was now become openly her rival.

THE time of departing from Madam *Lurſay*'s drew near. I was to loſe *Hortenſia*; in that cruel, approaching moment of ſeparation, I felt how immenſely dear her preſence was to me. That happineſs, then the only that cou'd give me any joy, I was unwilling, if it was poſſible to prevent it, ſhou'd for the future be owing to chance. Were it not for the diſtance between Madam *Theville* and my mother,
I ſaw

I saw no difficulty in obtaining admittance to her house; but this consideration, and the dread of a refusal, prevented my suing for it. I approach'd Miss *Theville*, and making her party at ombre the subject of my conversation, I ask'd her what success she had had?——But indifferent Sir, said she coldly.——I have been as unlucky as you, Madam, replied I. By your manner of playing resum'd she, 'twou'd have been difficult to have made fortune favourable; and if I don't mistake, I heard you reproach'd with frequent absence. You were not yourself more attentive, said Madam *Lursay* to her, and I really believe you knew not one moment what you were doing. That is, said *Hortensia* blushing, because I always grow weary at ombre. I can't conceive, said Madam *Theville*, what is the matter with her, but of late she alarms me, she is so prodigiously melancholy, and nothing amuses her. She's too fond of retirement, said Madam *Lursay*; and I beg we may think of something to divert her to morrow. Madam, said I in a half whisper to Madam *Theville*, I take an interest in my cousin, and shou'd any thing offer to my imagination capable of amusing her, will you give me leave, in waiting on you, to communicate it to you? I believe, Sir, you are not excellent at advice, answer'd she laughing; however, you'll do me a pleasure. Then, if you will come here to morrow early after dinner, said Madam *Lursay*, but in a low voice, we'll go together to Madam *Theville*'s. In raptures I accepted her proposal, and was so charm'd with the certainty of seeing the object of all my wishes the next day, that I
never

never reflected on the place of rendezvous, nor what might be Madam *Lursay's* chief motive in propofing it.

WHILST I was felicitating myself on fo much good fortune, *Versac* tho' greatly displeas'd with Mifs *Theville*, entertain'd her about her melancholy, and the readieft means to get rid of it. Tho' he treated this fubject with proper gravity, he cou'd get no other answers from her but fuch as exprefs'd great coldnefs and indifference. Too vain to let it be feen how much he was piqued, he was ftill too fenfibly touch'd to be able to appear quite unconcern'd. I faw him blufh, in fpite of himfelf, to find fo little regard paid to his charms; and indeed fuch a conquest, was too flattering to lofe all hopes of, without regret.

To please the common run of women, to fee them pafs from another's arms to his, was a triumph he was accuftomed to, and fhar'd with too many, to be fufficient to gratify his vanity. In that crowd of women who courted his favour, and meafur'd their happinefs or misfortunes by the greater or leffer number of moments they fix'd his attention, not one perhaps flatter'd his pride: Women, long before loft to reputation, and who were willing to compleat their infamy with him: Senfelefs women, who think the man in vogue, let him be what he will, deferving of their homage, and are lefs taken with any merit he may have, than the pleafure of hearing it faid they belong to him: Misjudging women,
more

more pleas'd with procuring themselves an adventure that ruins them for ever, than enjoying the satisfaction of a private commerce, which wou'd save them from publick censure; such women as these he every day met with. The object of every woman's fancy, reigning in the hearts of none, and himself indifferent to all; he yielded to their desires without loving them, wasted his time without the least relish for their company, and abandon'd them, without knowing more of their minds than when first he took up with them, in order to give himself up to others, whom he knows as little, and disregards as much.

NOT that Miss *Theville*, with all her beauty, cou'd have inspir'd *Versac* with love. He was not form'd to feel those tender emotions which constitute the happiness of a susceptible heart; but Miss *Theville's* was as new and artless as her charms, and without intending to make it happy, he wou'd gladly have brought it under his dominion. As he had never met with any resistance, but what proceeded from coquetry, he had a mind, for once, to please himself with the sight of a young person overcome unknown to herself, astonish'd at her first sighs, yielding entirely to love at the very time she thinks she is repelling it, living, thinking, acting solely for her lover, insensible of pleasure, pain, or duty where her passion is not concern'd. The conquest of Miss *Theville's* heart, however glorious, wou'd have no more than satisfied *Versac's* pride, who, tho' incapable of loving himself, imagin'd there was great

great pleasure in being tenderly lov'd; a pleasure, he was not fuch a dupe as to feek among the women he honour'd with his favours. Mifs *Theville's* unfavourable reception was quite unexpected, he cou'd not conceive how he now came to meet with a neglect, he had never experienc'd before.

WEARY of the part he was acting, he resolv'd taking his leave of Madam *Lursay*. 'Twas late; we all did the fame. I make no doubt but ſhe wifh'd me to ſtay, but it was impoſſible to contrive expedients before *Versac*, who then added to his natural quickneſs, a determin'd reſolution to thwart her in every thing. Madam *Senanges* entreated me at parting not to forget the ſong I had promis'd her; *Versac* who was handing her down, beg'd of her ironically not to give herſelf any concern about an affair, which he made his own. *Pranxi*, attended Madam *Theville*, and I was left to conduct *Hortenfia*. I preſented her my hand; but had no ſooner touch'd hers, than I was ſeiz'd with an univerſal trembling: The emotion was ſo violent I had ſcarcely ſtrength enough to ſupport myſelf. I dared neither to ſpeak to her or look at her. I put her into her coach, both preſerving the moſt profound ſilence. *Versac* waited to ſalute her in the coldeſt manner he cou'd think of; this he did, I believe, as much to ſhew how greatly he was piqued at her behaviour, as to prove his indifference to it. Again was I tormented with *Senanges's* endearing looks, and the cruel marks of Miſs *Theville's* coldneſs: They drove off; and I made the more haſte
to

to follow, that I dreaded a remorse in Madam *Lursay*.

I SHALL give no account of the thoughts I was perplex'd with that night. There is no man so unfortunate as never to have lov'd, of course no one who is not in a condition to picture them to himself. Had the gratification of my vanity been sufficient to satisfy my heart, I shou'd, no doubt, have been less disturb'd. Madam *Senanges* entirely bent upon giving me all manner of encouragement, Madam *Lursay* from whom I had no more delays to apprehend, both conspir'd to place me in the most flattering light; particularly the first, who, tho' her charms had ceas'd to draw the particular attention of the publick, still kept it alive by frequent new adventures. But where was the flattery! to find myself the object of the desires of a prude, and of a woman of gallantry, when the only heart that cou'd give me happiness seem'd averse? Witness to *Hortensia's* melancholy and particular coldness to me, what cou'd I attribute them to, but to some secret passion burning in her breast? My first jealous suspicions of *Germeuil* re-kindled in my soul; by dwelling on them they became enormous. I call'd to mind a thousand things, which, whilst they were happening did not affect me much, but that now, crowding into my memory, convinc'd me fully they mutually lov'd one another.

I WAS in doubt the next day whether I shou'd tell Madam de *Meilcour* that I had seen Madam *Theville*.

Theville. I fear'd the diſunion ſubſiſting between them, wou'd make my mother command me not to ſee her, I was ſo ſure I ſhou'd diſobey her in that particular, that I was very loth to put myſelf in the way of it. But then, on the other hand, it might be more dangerous to keep it a ſecret, as in all probability ſhe wou'd hear it from ſomebody elſe, and my making it a myſtery, would ſerve only to make her more watchful over me. I concluded then that the moſt prudent ſtep, both with regard to my love, and the duty I ow'd my mother, was to conceal nothing from her. In giving her an account of the things I had ſeen and done the night before, I told her, as a matter of no conſequence, that I had ſeen Madam *Theville*. That name which I was almoſt afraid to pronounce, I was delighted to find had not the effect I dreaded : She answer'd me with a ſort of indifference, ſhe had not before heard that Madam *Theville* was in town. Madam *Lurſay*, who knows you do not love her, replied I, did not, I ſuppoſe, care to tell you of it. There wou'd have been nothing diſagreeable to me in being made acquainted with her return, ſaid ſhe, the diſtance that is between us has not made us enemies. Then may I hope, Madam, you will not diſapprove of my viſiting her. Far be it from me, answer'd ſhe, ſhe is ſo good and vertuous a woman, that her acquaintance and converſation cannot but be highly ſerviceable to you. But, added ſhe, I am told her daughter is handsome, have you ſeen her ? what do you think of her ?

THIS

THIS very easy question, so puzzled me, that I was just on the point of telling her, I did not think myself a competent judge. I got the better of one difficulty to fall into a greater. Obligated to tell what I thought of Miss *Theville*, love dictated her Elogy.

WHETHER I have seen her, and what I think of her? oh! Madam, you wou'd be enchanted with her! Her figure, her deportment, her understanding, every thing is engaging in her, every thing delightful. Her eyes! the most charming, the tenderest, the most moving! Were you but to see her smile.-----You praise her very warmly, interrupted she, and I imagine you had rather live with her, than I with her mother. I only that instant perceiv'd I had said too much. Madam, answered I, with an emotion I strove in vain to suppress, I have pictur'd her such as she appear'd to me, tho' perhaps not near so well as she deserves. And I must confess, I did not find myself disposed to hate her. I do not desire you to hate her, replied she, but I shou'd be better pleas'd her charms had made a more gentle impresson than they seem to have done. Can any ill consequence, Madam, arise to you from my loving her? And tho' I shou'd love her, is that a reason I shou'd be belov'd? If you were not already enamour'd, your breast wou'd not be filled with these sentiments. Why, can you imagine, Madam, I could fall in love when I only saw her for a moment? She's handsome, and you
are

are young : at your age the force of sympathy is to be fear'd ; the lefs experience a man has, the more apt he is to fall in love.

AND wou'd my loving her be attended with fo much mischief ? Yes, undoubtedly, fince your paffion for her can never be made happy.

BUT my apprehenfions about her indifference are perhaps groundlefs. I hope not ; for fhould her inclinations correfpond with yours, you wou'd only be the more miferable ; for, in fhort, I muft tell you, I have views for you, which do not terminate in Mifs *Theville* : She is not defign'd to be the object of your caprice ; and once more, I advife you not to be too ferialous in that purfuit. At the fame time, I flatter myfelf, your inclinations are not yet fo far engag'd, but that I may communicate my thoughts to you, and lay my objections before you, without giving you pain. Madam, faid I, endeavouring all I cou'd to hide my grief, I told you what I thought of Mifs *Theville*, in pure compliance with the neceffity you laid me under of answering your queftions. I own her beauty ftruck me, but we do not always, at leaft I imagine fo, fall in love with what we admire. I faw her without emotion, and may fee her again without any danger to my heart. Nevertheless, Madam, you may command me as you please, and I renounce her fight for ever, if you tell me fuch is your will.

THE serenity with which I pronounc'd these words impos'd on Madam de *Meilcourt*, who moreover lov'd me too well not to be easily deceiv'd. No, my son, answer'd she, see her: Whatever end you propose in her acquaintance, whether love be your motive, or not, I neither will nor ought to constrain you. My commands, if you love her, can never destroy your passion; and if you love her not, I am not so ridiculous as to create in you that desire, by forbidding you to see her. This conversation was too tormenting, for me to seek its continuance; I took leave of my mother to go to Madam *Lursay*, who was to conduct me to *Hortensia's*.

ON the way I meditated on every thing that oppos'd my love; and the less prospect I saw I had of happiness, the deeper I felt my passion rooted in my heart. A rival, who, I thought, had no difficulties to surmount; a mother who upon bare suspicion had declar'd herself against me; a woman whose love or caprice, for the danger was equal from either, I was about to affront, but nothing cou'd make me refrain. I arriv'd at Madam *Lursay's*, wrapt up in *Hortensia*, and not in a disposition to remember what had pass'd the night before between Madam *Lursay* and me; I now despis'd her more than ever, since I suspected her of having been kind to *Pranzi*.

NOTWITH-

NOTWITHSTANDING all the precautions she had threatened me with, I found her alone: She receiv'd me like one with whom every thing is concluded, with tenderness and familiarity. My coldness, for I humour'd her in nothing, embarrass'd her. Bows, respect, sullen looks; what a return for all the favours she had already shewn me, and those she had in store for me! How reconcile so little eagerness and love with my former transports? She knew she had a right, yet she did not dare, to complain. She look'd at me with eyes of astonishment, and vainly sought in mine for that ardor they had once seem'd to promise her. Silent, and more constrain'd than ever, I behav'd more like a sated lover, than one who had favours to expect. My conversation turn'd upon general topicks, things of course, always proscrib'd between persons who love one another. Exasperated at a behaviour so unbecoming, and so little deserv'd from me, she turn'd her thoughts to Madam Senanges, and doubted not an instant but all my indifference was owing to the liking I had taken to that lady, who had robb'd her of my affections. This notion not absolutely groundless, griev'd her to the heart: To think that a woman of depraved manners, without youth, without beauty, shou'd in one day snatch from her the fruits of three months labour and attention! And at such a time! After such expectations! When she had reason to be assur'd of my love, when she had overcome her scruples, and I had got the better of bashfulness and prejudice.

I EASILY perceiv'd, tho' she said nothing, how greatly she was discontented and afflicted. But I knew not what to say to her. *Hortensia's* lov'd idea, and my mother's discourse employ'd all my thoughts. I had no leisure to pity the sufferings I had brought on Madam *Lursay*. Weary at length of being so long alone with her, I came to a resolution. Madam, said I, are not we to go to Madam *Theville's*? We are, Sir, answered she hastily, I have waited for you a considerable time, I almost began to think you had forgot I was to conduct you thither. I have no such ridiculous absences, Madam, replied I. You have a subject, however, very worthy Sir, of occasioning them; Madam *Senanges*, I believe now, is the only one you cannot forget.

THIS Madam *Senanges*, she accus'd me of not being able to forget, was, however, so little in my thoughts, that I did not till that instant recollect the visit she had made me promise her. I was by no means displeas'd at Madam *Lursay's* jealousy: I thought it of some consequence she shou'd not discover the real object of my passion, and with pleasure I found Madam *Senanges* the only one she fear'd. I smiled at her mistake. She seem'd greatly incens'd at my indifference on a subject she had taken so much to heart, and which she had in a manner reproach'd me with. You have no doubt, Sir, made a fine choice, continued she, finding I made her no answer, you cou'd not set out better; such

ſuch a beginning will do you a great deal of honour, and gain you a conſiderable reputation in the world. I know not, Madam, answer'd I coldly, what it is you are talking of.----- You do not know! interrupted ſhe in a gibling accent; that's very extraordinary: I ſhou'd imagine, tho' your failing be not in gueſſing things too readily, it is impoſſible you can miſtake my meaning; nor are you miſtaken. But if you had reſolv'd being diſcreet to day, you ſhou'd have been more cautious yeſterday, and not have diſcover'd to all the world the important ſecret of your ſoul. When all's ſaid, Madam *Senanges* does not inſiſt upon ſo much myſtery: Her vanity requires a publick triumph; and you will uſe her extremely ill if you offer to keep the ſecret.

You ſuppoſe me better with Madam *Senanges* than I wiſh to be, Madam, answered I; I do not even know that ſhe honours me with any particular regard. You don't know it? replied ſhe, I love you for your modeſty: You ſeem'd not ſo full of it yeſterday, when you answer'd like one who well underſtood her intentions, and was no ways averſe to a conformity. I know not what her intentions were, replied I; but I thought I might answer her politeneſſes without incurring your diſpleaſure and reproaches. As for reproaching you, answer'd ſhe haſtily, I think I have no right to it: Love alone can give ſuch an authority, friendship may adviſe; and if you imagine I have any thing more than friendship, you are miſtaken. Another thing you muſt give me leave to tell you, leering is not eſſential

sential to politeness. Really, Madam, I know not what leering is, and you are sensible I do not. Madam *Senanges*, 'tis true, took great notice of me; but I cou'd observe nothing of that eagerness to please with which you charge her. If she has form'd such a design, she keeps it to herself, for she has not yet communicated it to me. We convers'd together; but her subjects were general, and I must be a coxcomb indeed, had I been ever so willing, to have extracted any thing, out of what she said, particular to myself; you know we had no private conversation.——Without the help of a private conversation, interrupted she, many things may be settled; and a rendezvous between you was not the less agreed upon. I only promis'd to bring her some verses she wanted to see, and I can't think in any shape that can be call'd a rendezvous. If it can't be call'd one, answer'd she suddenly, it will end in one. But why cou'd not you let her look somewhere else for those verses? Where was the necessity of your declaring you had them? I did no more for her than I shou'd have done for any one else; and had not *Versac* meddled in the matter, and told me it was proper I shou'd wait on her myself and deliver them, I shou'd not now be subject to this visit, and the quarrel it has drawn on me from you. A quarrel from me! said Madam *Lursay* shrugging up her shoulders, that's a mighty extraordinary expression! No, Sir, I have no thoughts of quarreling with you, I have already told you so, I repeat it once more, be so good as to believe me: I express myself, I think, without
 any

any fort of animofity. And after all, what is it to me whether you love Madam *Senanges* or not, are not you free to make yourfelf as ridiculous as you please? Ridiculous! cried I, in what particular, pray Madam? With regard only to Madam *Senanges*, answer'd ſhe. We always partake of the difcredit of thofe to whom we are attach'd: A bad choice is a certain fign of bad principles; to take a liking to fuch a woman as Madam *Senanges*, is publickly confeſſing one pretends to no more merit than ſhe has, it is degrading yourfelf for ever. Sir, do not deceive yourfelf: Believe me a frolick may be forgot, but the ſhame of having indulg'd it with a deſpicable object laſts eternally. Now, Sir, let us go as ſoon as you will, I have no more to ſay.

I GAVE her my hand: as we went ſhe never once look'd at me, I cou'd perceive anger and indignation glowing in her cheeks. And indeed cou'd any thing be more mortifying than what had paſs'd between us? Cou'd I have pleas'd with greater coldneſs, and in a more inſulting manner? Were theſe apologies fit for a lover? She had too much ſenſe, too much experience, and at the ſame time too much love, not to ſee how grievous ſuch a proceeding was to her. Never had ſhe ſhewn me ſo many marks of tenderneſs, and never had they been ſo ill requited. I muſt have known ſhe intended to reproach me, we were alone, yet I never once thought of throwing myſelf at her feet! I neglected ſeizing that moſt favourable opportunity!

ty ! In fine, I suffer'd her to escape ! Was I then ignorant of the sweets of a falling out ?

WHETHER she made these reflections I know not, but she mounted her coach with an air strongly expressive of discontent and anguish of mind. I seated myself by her with as much assurance as if I had given her all the reason in the world to be satisfied with me. Tho' visible her anger, I was so far from endeavouring to pacify it, that I turn'd all my thoughts to the object of my wishes. I had resolv'd making Madam *Lursay* instrumental in reuniting Madam *Theville* and my mother ; and without considering whether this was a proper time, I had no mind to lose the opportunity of speaking to her on that subject. My mother, said I, knows that Madam *Theville* is in town, that I have seen her at your house, Madam, and that you are so kind as to introduce me there to day. She made me no answer. You are, Madam, continued I, an intimate friend to both, I wonder you have not before now been able to prevail on them to see one another, this surprizes me the more that I know Madam de *Meilcour* is no ways averse to a reconciliation. I believe, answered she without looking at me, Madam *Theville* wou'd not refuse to listen to what I shou'd propose to her on that head : I have oftentimes thought of it ; and am the more inclin'd to flatter myself I cou'd bring it about, that I know they mutually esteem one another. I can answer for my mother, she has no aversion to Madam *Theville*, nor can I conceive what has alienated them, and
broke

broke off their friendship. Different tastes, tho' with a certain conformity of manners, not often to be met with indeed, occasion these divisions, answer'd she: We are generally fonder of the company of those who amuse us, than of the persons we esteem. Madam *Theville*, with an infinite number of good qualities, is not sweet-temper'd; the inflexibility of her character is remarkable in all companies; she must be very well known before she can be lov'd; the virtues in her mind do not shine forth at first, they lye hid under an outward appearance of harshness, which occasions such a stand-off, that in general, people are not curious to study whether there be any thing latent to make amends. Madam de *Meilcour*, good humour'd, obliging, polite, possess'd of as many virtues as Madam *Theville*, but with a more agreeable aspect, cou'd never brook the imperious airs of her cousin; and without the least animosity on either side, they have neglected seeing one another for a considerable time past. I comprehend you, Madam, answer'd I, and conceive that had it not been for Madam *Theville's* long stay in the country, this antipathy had been over long ago. You cannot properly call it an antipathy, answer'd she, what has divided them is certainly not near so strong, and much easier to be got the better of. May I then presume, Madam, you will be so good as to endeavour their reconciliation. This seems to me the more proper step for you to take, that, as they are both your friends, they may possibly meet at your house, which wou'd lay them both under great constraint. And tho'

that were to happen, said she, they have too much good sense, and know too much of the world, ever to shew their dislike in publick, were it ever so great. No, Sir, it is at my house that I intend they shall meet. To make a bustle and noise wou'd be but a bad way of preparing them for a reconciliation; I confide in the knowledge I have of them both, to bring them properly together.

As she concluded these words, we stop'd at Madam Theville's. The raptures I was in to think of seeing *Hortensia* again, rekindled in my soul those emotions I had felt in her presence, and render'd me still more neglectful of Madam Lursay, whom my ill-tim'd severities had thrown into the greatest dejection. I had heard her sigh frequently in the coach; every word she said, she pronounc'd with a trembling voice, and, as it were, stifling with grief or anger; she took no pains to hide all this from me, nor was it possible for me to avoid taking notice of it. The miserable condition I saw her in, flatter'd my vanity: The sight was quite new, but serv'd only to amuse not to soften me, nay, it ceas'd to be agreeable when I consider'd she had given the same feast to *Pranzi*, and many others, who, I now thought, were numberless; there were no bounds to the bad opinion I had of her. We went in together to Madam Theville's. *Hortensia* was alone with her mother. Tho' she was dress'd in a very elegant manner, I found she look'd dejected; but that languishing added to her charms. She held a book which she laid aside when we appear'd.

Madam

Madam *Theville* receiv'd me as well as I cou'd wish; but *Hortensia* was neither more fprightly, nor lefs constrain'd than the night before. 'Twas but natural ſhe ſhou'd be reſerv'd before a perſon ſhe was ſo little acquainted with as ſhe was with me, and had I not lov'd her, I ſhou'd not have been alarm'd; but to one in my condition every thing gives ſuſpicion and uneaſineſs. I wou'd have had her make me allowances for a paſſion it was impoſſible ſhe cou'd be certain of: I imagin'd ſhe cou'd not be deceiv'd in the manifeſt impreſſion her beauty had made; that my looks and confuſion were ſufficient proofs of my love; and that, in fine, had I been in the leaſt agreeable to her, ſhe wou'd have eaſily underſtood me.

OUR general converſation did not continue long, I ſoon had an opportunity of addreſſing myſelf to Miſs *Theville* in particular. The book ſhe had laid aſide was near her. We have interrupted your reading, Madam, ſaid I, for which we are the more to blame that you ſeem'd intereſted in what you read. It is the hiſtory of an unfortunate lover, answered ſhe. No doubt then, Madam, he is not lov'd. He is lov'd, replied ſhe. Then how can he be miſerable? Why do you imagine, Sir, that to be lov'd is ſufficient to make one happy, and that a mutual paſſion is not the greateſt of miſfortunes, when every thing oppoſes its felicity? I believe, Madam, the torments endur'd in ſuch a caſe very terrible, but the certainty of being lov'd enables us to ſupport them. How many miſeries are forgotten in one kind look
from

from the object of our wishes? What pleasing hopes does it not revive in the soul? Of what ineffable delights is it not the source?

BUT, Sir, consider the condition of two lovers who have every thing to combat. Undoubtedly, Madam, they suffer, but they love: Those tender sentiments which they cherish in their bosoms are inflam'd by opposition; is it not serving them essentially to add to the fire with which they consume? See they one another for a moment? How delightful does . . . moment appear? Find they an opportunity of speaking? How greedily do they communicate the inmost recesses of their souls? are they constrain'd by a jealous or watchful eye? Still they find means to breathe their love, to prove it, to mingle it with their most indifferent actions, and their seemingly least animated expressions. What you say, may be very true, Sir, but for one such moment as you speak of, how many days of anguish and affliction? The terrors of infidelity too, are often join'd to the torment of absence. How is it possible to be sure of a lover we have not continually under our eyes? May he not grow weary, look out at first for amusement only, then resolve on a new attachment, destructive of the very remembrance of the former?

THE misfortune of losing what we love, Madam, is not always owing to a constraint on the passion, and I believe lovers who have free liberty to love, are much more subject to inconstancy.

I AM

I AM always surpriz'd, answer'd ſhe, when I conſider the difficulty in preſerving a lover, how we can ever bring ourſelves to admit of one.

WE might ſay the ſame thing with regard to a miſtreſs; for I am far from imagining the heart of a woman eaſier to be fix'd than that of a man. I cou'd prove the contrary, ſaid ſhe ſmiling, but I am better pleas'd you ſhou'd be of that opinion, 'tis not ſo hurtful as to deſerve confutation. I cannot think as you do, Madam, and cou'd I diſſuade you from your opinion of us, I ſhou'd think myſelf the happieſt of men. That wou'd be a difficult matter answer'd ſhe bluſhing. Too well I know it, ſo much happineſs is not reſerv'd for me! To make me alter my way of thinking, replied ſhe greatly embarraſs'd, wou'd be of ſo little conſequence to you, that I cannot conceive why you ſhou'd wiſh it! I'm ſo thoroughly convinc'd I am in the right, I do not think it is poſſible ever to make me change. Yet the time will come, Madam, when you will be of a different opinion. That prediction, ſaid ſhe laughing, does not make me tremble. I am more obſtinate than you imagine, and ſo ſure, beſides, that my future happineſs depends on my preſent judgment in that matter, that nothing ſhall ever make me give it up. With as many reaſons to fear as you can poſſibly have, I cannot ſay I find myſelf ſo reſolute as you are, ſaid I; but were my reſolution a thouſand times ſtronger even than yours, one look from you wou'd be ſufficient to deſtroy it for ever.

HURRIED

HURRIED away by love, I was, undoubtedly, going to lay open to *Hortensia* the whole state of my soul, when Madam *Lursay*, who just finish'd a letter Madam *Theville* had given her to read, came over to us. Tho', by this means, I was hindred from telling *Hortensia* how much I lov'd her, I had at least the satisfaction to think she might easily guess I did, nay, that she even seem'd not displeas'd with the little I had discover'd of my sentiments. We had both express'd ourselves warmly, but I cou'd perceive no anger in her eyes; and tho' I cou'd judge of nothing favourable to me from her answers, yet I had no longer reason to think she had that aversion to me I suspected she had. One wou'd imagine you were quarrelling, said Madam *Lursay* to her. Not absolutely, answer'd she laughing; but it is certain we cou'd not agree. That was your fault, Madam, said I, I propos'd a method which wou'd have put an end to the dispute. And pray what was it about? said Madam *Lursay*. A mere trifle, replied *Hortensia*. Monsieur *Meilcour* wanted me to embrace an opinion I told him I never wou'd. If he was recommending one of his own to you, said Madam *Lursay* smartly, you were much in the right; he has none but what are extraordinary, peculiar to himself, and for that reason perhaps he is the more tenacious of them. How headstrong soever you may think me, Madam, said I, I was willing to submit to my cousin, and she can tell you 'twas sincerely and without regret. I can't say, Sir, I am quite so sure of that, replied *Hortensia*.

fia. And you are in the right, added Madam *Lurfay*; for, with that honeft countenance he does not want for his fhare of falfehood.

I PLAINLY faw Madam *Lurfay* had a mind to pick a quarrel with me; but tho' forely I was vex'd to be accus'd of falfehood before *Hortenfia*, I chofe rather to ftifle my resentment than give Madam *Lurfay* the pleafure of an explanation; befides, I was perfuaded that if I cou'd accustom *Hortenfia* to listen to me, I shou'd soon perfuade her to believe me fincere. My filence exasperated Madam *Lurfay*, a look ſhe then darted at me gave warning of her indignation; but I was no longer concern'd about any thing ſhe cou'd think. Full of this overture of my paſſion, I thought of nothing but what cou'd make it ſucceed. As ready now to hope as I had been before to deſpair, I doubted not but *Hortenfia* wou'd ſoon become ſuſceptible; what do I ſay? ſcarcely did I imagine her otherwiſe at preſent. I forgot in theſe ſweet illuſions with which I fomented my love, that antipathy I thought I ſhou'd never be able to conquer, and that rival who the night before had given me the greateſt alarms; in fine, I had ſcarcely ſpoken when ſhe anſwer'd me, I gaz'd on her, and ſhe ſeem'd not to avoid my looks. That melancholy I had ſo often reprov'd her for in my own mind, and which I attributed to the abſence of him ſhe lov'd, appear'd to me now to be no more than that pleaſing melancholy a heart intent on the object of its wiſhes indulges
with

with pleasure, such a melancholy, in fine, as I had experienc'd since I first beheld her.

THIS delicious enchantment did not last long; word was brought——the Marquis of *Germeuil*. At sight of him I trembled: the surprise he seem'd to be in to find me at Madam *Theville's* encreas'd my jealousy. The air of freedom he assum'd, the marks of great friendship Madam *Theville* shew'd him, *Hortensia's* visible joy, every thing rous'd my suspicions, every thing put my soul to the rack. Heavens! said I to myself in a fury, that I cou'd think I was belov'd! That I cou'd forget *Germeuil* is the only one that can please her! How, after the demonstrations I have had of their mutual love, has it escap'd my memory?

THE more I had flatter'd myself, the more *Germeuil's* presence disturb'd me. I conceiv'd, in looking at him, such transports of rage, that with much ado, I contain'd myself: With reluctance I made him a bow; but had not command enough of myself to answer as I shou'd have done, some polite things he said to me. He flew to Miss *Theville*, and address'd her with that animated civility which accompanies an ardent desire of pleasing. Ease and sweet tranquillity of mind sparkled from his eyes: There love was visibly to be read; a love free from the least inquietude, and such as is cherish'd, by the certainty of a grateful return. He said a thousand sprightly amorous things to her, which made me tremble for what he might say,
when

when they fhould be alone. His expreffions were lively and tender, fuch, I imagin'd, as are only to be directed to the perfon one is desperately in love with, fuch, in fine, as I cou'd have conceiv'd for *Hortenfia*. He darted thofe glances on her, with one of which ſhe might have bleſſed me; in return, ſhe ſmiled on him, liſten'd to him with complaiſance, ſeem'd eager to return him answers, and never once deign'd in the leaſt to diſguiſe the pleaſure ſhe took in his company. So mortifying a ſight pierc'd me to the heart. A hundred times I aſſur'd myſelf I lov'd her no more, but at every profeſſation of indifference I felt an encrease of paſſion. Each time I ſaw her lovely eyes full of ſweetneſs and fire, fix on *Germeuil*; each time her charming lips diſclos'd to ſmile on him; intoxicated with delight, I yielded to raptures: I almoſt forgot another reign'd in that heart I wou'd have ſacrific'd the world for, and that the pleaſure of ſeeing her look ſo beautiful was owing to my rival. Theſe emotions ſubſiding, I began again to think of my miſfortunes, rage rekindled in my breaſt, with gloomineſs and diſtraction painted in my looks, I review'd them by turns. Wandering about the room, frantick with love and deſpair, I had neither the power to go near them, or join in their converſation. Several times *Germeuil* addreſs'd the diſcourſe to me. With difficulty I answer'd him, but always ſo ſhort, that he reſolv'd at laſt to ſpeak no more to me. One wou'd have imagin'd by Miſs *Theville*'s behaviour, that ſhe had penetrated into the ſecrets of my ſoul with no other view than to indulge

dulge herself the more in the barbarous pleasure of seeing me miserable. Every now and then she whisper'd *Germeuil*, lean'd familiarly towards him; these things however innocent in themselves, did not then appear so to me, they drove me quite into despair.

UNACCUSTOM'D to so many different emotions, I sunk at length under their weight. My grief and anguish of heart were so violent, I cou'd disguise it no longer. Madam *Lursay* perceiving an alteration in my eyes, and a sudden paleness all over my face, ask'd me if I found myself ill. At this question Miss *Theville* came hastily over to me, and (just as I answer'd Madam *Lursay*, I was not indeed very well) offer'd me some waters whose virtues she prais'd much. Alas! Madam, said I sighing, I fear they can be of no service to me, my disorder does not proceed from what you imagine. She made me no answer, but I thought she seem'd mov'd at my condition. That opinion, and the eagerness with which she flew to my relief gave me a moment's pleasure. I fix'd my eyes on her; but my attention, no doubt, constraining her, she blushing cast down hers and retir'd. I relaps'd into my former grief, was vex'd for having spoke to her, and fear'd I had said too much, or that my eyes too expressive of tenderness had given too strong a sense of my words.

MADAM *Lursay*, ignorant of the private interests of my heart, and entirely taken up with the wrongs

wrongs done to herfelf, attributed the melancholy
 fituation I was in, to my impatience in being ab-
 fent from Madam *Senanges*. That paffion which
 appear'd to her as ridiculous as fudden, gave her
 however great uneafinefs. She judg'd of it's ftrength
 by its progress; it feem'd to flow with too much
 rapidity, for her ever to be able to ftem the torrent.
 She was certain 'twas that very night to be with
Senanges, and that then all wou'd be loft to her.
 But more particularly fhe fear'd *Versac*, who, fhe
 knew, wou'd pique himfelf in honour upon the
 fuccefs of an intrigue he had undertaken, lefs out of
 regard to *Senanges*, than with an intention of robbing
 her of my affections. The danger was preffing,
 but the remedy difficult to be found: She had loft,
 by being dilatory, her right of empire over me, and
 to make me hope for favours I no longer foli-
 cited, wou'd have been a bad means of regaining me.
 Uncertain how I fhould receive any propofal fhe
 might make, fhe was loth to hazard any. The
 voice of love is only prevailing over the perfon who
 loves, and becomes ridiculous when incapable of
 foftening. However, fhe imagin'd, fince farcaftical
 and contemptuous airs had no manner of effect on
 me; that it was the only expedient fhe had left.
 She came over and fat by me. Madam *Theville*
 who was writing, gave her an opportunity of fpeak-
 ing to me. For fome time fhe fix'd her eyes on
 me; and obferving me ftill plung'd in the deepeft
 meditation: Do you confider what you are doing
 Sir, faid fhe in a whifper? What, will you not
 give room to be thought of you? They may think
 what

what they please, answer'd I peevishly. One wou'd imagine by your behaviour, said she with gentleness, you are here against your will. Has any thing displeas'd you? But, added she sighing, I am in the wrong to question you about what I am thoroughly convinc'd of: My presence alone disturbs you, and you cannot bear that I shou'd take an interest in any thing that concerns you: You make me no answer.---Wou'd you have me believe what I say to be true. You are easily fretted, Madam, replied I, and have as little reason to quarrel with me now, as you had a minute ago. But suppose me, said she, both now, and then, in the wrong, shou'd you be offended? Perhaps I do ill to put you in mind of it, but, *Meilcour*, if ever you felt what you have so often repeated to me, so far from being angry, you wou'd be thankful for what I tell you. And, after all; what is my crime? I told you I suspected you, not of loving Madam *Senanges*, you have too much sense to be capable of a liking so unworthy a man of honour; but of too rashly swallowing her baits, without being aware of the consequences. I know better than you how far such a woman can prevail, and what an ascendant she may gain over you. Delicacy wou'd have no share in your seduction, at the same time you despis'd her, you wou'd yield to her. And who can pretend to say but that same caprice you are at first asham'd of indulging, may become by degrees a serious and violent passion. Unfortunately the most despicable objects oftentimes make the deepest impression. At first you depend on the little liking you

you have to them. They are never imagin'd dangerous ; but imperceptibly the imagination warms, the head turns, what was thought detefted is lov'd, and the heart at length partakes of the diforder in the mind. Such will be your cafe ; what fhall I then have left, I do not mean of thofe sentiments with which, if I may believe you, I inspir'd you, but of the friendship I always had for you, if I am no longer to advife you without giving offence ? Were it even true that more fufceptible than I cared to appear, I fecretly dreaded lofing you, in a word, that I was jealous, fhould that be a reafon for you to hate me ? But, Madam, I do not hate you. You do not hate me ! Can the moft cruel indifference be exprefs'd with greater coldnefs ? You do not hate me ! You tell me fo, and do not blufh in telling it ! What wou'd you have me fay, Madam ? nothing can fatisfy you, every thing makes you angry, every thing I fay or do is a crime. At your houfe I met a woman whom I did not feek, to whom I was by no means particular, yet you have found out that I love her. Here, I am thoughtful becaufe I have a prodigious head-ach ; no,——It muft be that I am tired of your company. If you continue to make the fame reflections on every action of mine, I forefee we fhall often difagree. No, Sir, replied fhe with indignation, you are miftaken. I have been too ill requited, ever to deign again to give myfelf any trouble about you. I fee what a heart you have, and I efteem it accordingly ; the day

day will come when perhaps you will be sorry for having lost mine.

WITH this conclusion she rose hastily; and impatient of her reproaches and *Germueil's* presence, two things I cou'd not bear at once, took my leave of Madam *Theville*, who tried in vain to prevail on me to stay. I was too sensibly piqued at *Hortensia's* behaviour to appear satisfied, in going away I shewed her all the marks of indifference, which she, in return, retorted most unmercifully.

I HAD order'd, notwithstanding Madam *Lur-say's* instances to the contrary, my coach to follow her's; I went into it, in despair for having left *Hortensia* with my rival, and strongly tempted to return, which wou'd certainly have been the case, cou'd I have thought of any thing capable of justifying such a step. Abandon'd to myself, and with a mind cruelly perplex'd, for a time I knew not where to go. Twice I was ask'd to no purpose whither I wou'd be drove. I dreaded solitude, yet I knew I was not in a condition to see company. At length, still undetermin'd, but to gain time, I desir'd them to drive to Madam *Senanges's*. However, I had no intention of seeing her. 'Twas so late I might reasonably expect not to find her at home; the worst that cou'd happen me, I thought, was to leave my name and the verses I promis'd her. But I was not born to be happy that day. Madam *Senanges* was at home. Her coach was at the door, which I flatter'd myself wou'd supply me
with

with a fufficient excuse for a fhort vifit. Up ftairs I went, vaftly uneafy about our enfuing tête à tête. I was yet a ft ranger to the art of fhortening them when tirefome; and prolonging them when agreeable. The notion, however, of feeing a woman who, I was fure, liked me, gave me a more than ordinary affurance. In reality, I fhould have been the only man *Madam Senanges* could have inspir'd with any fort of fear, unlefs indeed it were with that of pleafing her too much, which would have been very allowable. For my part I was not fenfible enough of the danger to which I expos'd myfelf, to be afraid. I knew that naturally fhe was very tender-hearted; but I had too little experience to forefee all the confequences of her goodnefs. I was conducted to her apartment; tho' the day was far fpent, *Madam Senanges* was ftill at her toilette. Nor was that to be wonder'd at. The fewer charms a woman has left, the more time fhe fhould take in repairing her lofles; *Madam Senanges* had many to repair. She appear'd to me pretty much the fame as the night before, only with this difference, that day-light gave her a few years more, and fome beauties lefs. As fhe thought as well of herfelf as every body elfe thought ill, fhe was not fenfible of the difadvantageous impreffion fhe made on me: Befides, fhe imagin'd fhe had conquer'd me the night before, and flatter'd herfelf that the only intent of my vifit was to settle certain preliminaries which, with her kind difpofition to conclufions, were not likely to be much difputed. She fcream'd out with joy when fhe faw me. What! it is you then!

faid

said she familiarly ; How charming you are to be so punctual ! I was afraid somebody had laid hold of you, and began almost to despair of your coming ; however, I assure you, I expected you. I'm concern'd, Madam, it was not in my power to wait on you sooner ; affairs of some moment detain'd me longer than I intended.——Affairs ! interrupted she, you affairs ! at your age can there be any but those of the heart ? And has it, by chance, been an affair of that nature that has detain'd you ? No, I protest to you, Madam, my heart is left pretty much at ease. You surprize me Sir, that's a thing I can never believe. But, Madam, said she to a lady that was sitting by her, and whom I had scarcely taken notice of 'till that instant, can you imagine he is made to be thus neglected ? Are not you as much astonish'd at what he says as I am ? The other answer'd her with a nod of approbation. But, Sir, you are not sincere, continued *Senanges*, or you are not told half what people think of you. And pray, Madam, by what means do I deserve the favourable opinion of anybody ?

I own, said she, I do not love to see young men have too good an opinion of themselves, but there is a justice which every man owes himself : When a person is form'd after a certain manner, it is ridiculous to be ignorant of it ; and no-body, certainly, can be better made than you. Don't I speak truth Madam ? 'Tis not every day that we meet with such a person as his : Some men are admired by
the

the hour, who are not to be compared to him. I ſee ſome women fall in love they know not why, and bring into vogue little ſhadows of men, not ſo much as worth looking at. Are not you ſometimes tempted to cry out——Surely this muſt be the reign of Atoms? With the handſomeſt face I ever beheld, he is admirably well made: I have ſaid it, and I inſiſt upon it, no body can be better.

WHILST ſhe was praſing me in this fulſome manner, her looks, as indiſcreet as her words, aſſur'd me ſhe felt every thing ſhe ſaid. She look'd at me, I can't ſay with tendereſs, that was not the expreſſion of her eyes: but who cou'd deſcribe them ſuch as they were? Weary of my panegyrick, and much more ſo of the perſon who made it: Here, Madam, ſaid I, are the verſes you aſk'd of me yeſterday. O! very true, I thank you, they are charming. Then taking me aſide; do you know that, were not Madam *Mongennes* preſent, I ſhou'd ſcold you prodigiouſly for coming ſo late; the pleaſure I have in ſeeing you does not prevent my thinking you might have been here ſooner, had you had a mind; but to make me ſome amends, I inſiſt upon your coming with us to the *Thulleries*. I did all in my power to excuſe myſelf from ſo diſagreeable a party; but ſhe preſs'd me ſo earneſtly, that I was forced at laſt to conſent. Going down ſtairs, ſhe lean'd familiarly on my arm which I offer'd her; then ſmiled moſt graciouſly on me, gave me in ſhort, all the marks of fondneſs and attention the time and place cou'd admit of. More embarraſs'd than flatter'd with all the advances ſhe made

H

me,

me, my aversion to her increas'd every moment. Tho' greatly I was prejudic'd against Madam *Lur-
say*, I cou'd not but be sensible of the wide differ-
ence there was between them. If Madam *Lur-
say* profess'd not all, she at least had some of the ver-
tues of her sex : Her weaknesses were conceal'd un-
der a fair outside ; she thought and express'd her-
self with difficulty ; but in Madam *Senanges* nothing
aton'd for the vices of her heart. By nature
form'd to be despis'd, one wou'd have imagin'd she
fear'd she was not quick enough in proving how
much she deserv'd contempt : Her ideas were child-
ish, and her conversation loathsome. Never did
she know how to mask her designs ; and it is diffi-
cult to say what she appear'd to be, in the same ca-
ses in which women of her own stamp, had the art
to pass only for women of gallantry. However,
sometimes she assum'd an air of dignity, but how
ridiculous did it make her ! She was so little quali-
fied to support the appearance of a person worthy
of respect, that vertue never appear'd more foreign
to her than when she affected it most. The gravi-
ty and reservedness with which I receiv'd the marks
of her regard, gave her no manner of uneasiness ;
and imagining my melancholy proceeded from some
doubts I might still be in about her affection, she
thought herself the more oblig'd to remove so
groundless an apprehension. By the pains she took
to compose my mind, I had reason to think she
judg'd my fears none of the smallest ; I alighted
with her at the *Thuilleries*, loaded with her favours,
and oppress'd with weariness.

End of the S E C O N D P A R T.

MEMOIRS

OF

Monfieur de *MEILCOUR*.

PART III.

THE hour of touring in the courfe * was
paſs'd when we arriv'd at the *Thuilleries*;
the garden was full of company. Madam
Senanges who only brought me there to ſhew me,
was delighted at this, and reſolv'd behaving in ſuch
a manner that no-body ſhou'd doubt but I belong'd
to her. 'Twas out of my power to oppoſe her de-
ſigns; and tho' cruelly vex'd to ſee myſelf the ob-
ject of her complaiſance, I neither knew how to
receive the marks ſhe gave me of it, or what ex-
cuſe to make, and retire. I was ſo depreſs'd with
* A place where the *French* nobility tour in coaches.

the scene I had gone through at Miss *Theville's*, that the most agreeable objects cou'd not have dissipated my melancholy, what relief then cou'd I expect to meet from the two women I was in company with?

PARTICULARLY I took a dislike to Madam *Mongennes*: She had that sort of figure, which without being remarkable either way, form'd a whole very disagreeable, and was render'd still more ungraceful by her immoderate desire of pleasing. With a great deal too much plumpness, and a shape never form'd for ease, she pretended to light airs. By dint of endeavouring to acquire a genteel carriage and deportment, she had arriv'd to such a pitch of shameful, bare-fac'd impudence, that it was impossible without having a mind turn'd like hers, not to be shock'd. Young, without any of the charms of youth, she seem'd so shatter'd and worn-out, that I cou'd not help having some sort of compassion for her. However, this lady, such as I have describ'd her, was not without her admirers; for vice supplied the place of agreeableness in an age when, to be in vogue, a woman cou'd not make herself too remarkable for licentiousness and extravagance.

THE ridiculous pride I saw bursting from her eyes, and the graceful airs she affected, far from inclining me to her, rais'd all my indignation against her. In reality I had no worse opinion of her than she deserv'd, but I doubt, were it not for her

her disdainful looks, whether I fhould have thought at firft as ill of her as I did. All the tender things ſhe had heard Madam *Senanges* ſay to me, ſeem'd to have no manner of effect on her. Piqued at this neglect, I examin'd her with ſo critical an eye, that I diſcover'd all her imperfections, forgave her none, and even magnified them to myſelf. I was ignorant that her not liking at firſt ſight, was by no means a bar to a ſubſequent good underſtanding, and that ſhe affected thoſe airs of indifference and diſdain, in order to provoke ſolicitation and a deſire of overcoming them; for, as I have ſince heard her ſay, a perpetual compliance, and a virtue that never remits any thing of its ſeverity, are two extremes women ought equally to avoid. I ſuppoſe it was in conformity to this wiſe maxim, that ſhe did not begin to be favourable to me, till about an hour after ſhe had ſeen me.

As long as we were in a place where ſhe found there were no ſpectators, ſhe never once deign'd to open her lips to me; but as ſoon as we drew near the grand walk, I perceiv'd her countenance clear'd up. She began to be ſprightly, gave a looſe to her tongue, and with ſuch a freedom as is never us'd with a perſon one ſees for the firſt time, but in the greateſt deſigns. Very little affected by a change I knew not the cauſe of, and which, had I gueſs'd it, wou'd not have intereſted me the more, I perſiſted in the ſame ſtrain ſhe had begun with me. Madam *Senanges* no ſooner perceiv'd her new ſcheme, than ſhe took the alarm: She judg'd, and I believe

very justly, that tho' Madam *Mongennes* might have no thoughts of pleasing me, she at least had a mind to pass for having pleas'd. Either way the insult was the same to Madam *Senanges*, who too perhaps was less flatter'd in my conquest, than the noise it might make. Such a direct opposition of interests made her bridle up, and with a toss of her head she gave *Mongennes* a very dry and serious look. *Mongennes*, in return, was far from being behind-hand with her. Thus I had the glory in the beginning of my career, of disuniting two women, neither of whom I had the least thoughts of.

WITHOUT comprehending at that time the cause of this sudden coldness, I concluded from their looks, that they had fallen out. They view'd each other with a gibing censorious eye; at length *Senanges*, having examin'd *Mongennes* from head to foot, told her, that really she had put on her cap too far back for her face. Very probably, Madam, said the other, for I take so little pains to set myself off, I seldom know how I am dress'd. Why then seriously now, said *Senanges*, it does not become you, and I wonder I never told you so before. Even *Pranzi*, whom you know admires you of all things, took notice of it the last time he saw you. Mr. *Pranzi* may make what remarks he pleases, but I advise him not to communicate them to me. And pray why so, Madam, if you will not allow your friend, whom will you allow to put you in mind of those things? I don't pretend to say but you are very well—all to that cap—but that

that cap is not to be bore with ; to neglect consulting fometimes how it is to be put on, is deliberately fpoiling the whole fyftem ; or rather, added ſhe with a malicious ſmile, it looks as if one intended to perfuade the world, one has a face to paſs at any rate, and that you know, my dear, is not a very modeſt pretenſion. My God ! Madam, and who is without their pretenſions, who is ſhe that does not always think herſelf young and amiable, and dreſſes her head at fifty, as I do at two and twenty ?

THIS repartee was ſo viſibly intended for *Senanges*, that ſhe redden'd with anger ; but a diſcuſſion of that matter might have been ſo diſadvantageous to her, that ſhe thought proper to drop the ſubject : Beſides, the place was unfit, and the time too precious to be loſt in confuting ſuch a trifle ; ſhe gave herſelf no uneaſineſs about any thing but her darling ſcheme, which was to convince the world that I belong'd to her, not to *Mongennes*——the reſt ſhe deſpiſed.

WE no ſooner appear'd in the grand walk, but all eyes were turn'd towards us. My two companions were certainly no new ſight to the publick, but I became one, worthy their attention and curioſity. They were too well known, for any body to imagine I was there upon neither of their accounts, but the conteſt being which ſhou'd make herſelf moſt agreeable to me, 'twas impoſſible to determine exactly to which I belong'd. *Senanges*, impatient to ſee the world in ſuſpence, put all engines.

gines to work, to get this important affair decided in her favour: Each time her rival attempted to look at me, a stroke of her fan given apropos, interrupted the glance, and made it abortive: To this she added all the affected airs she had formerly practis'd with success, spoke to me in whispers, look'd so tender, so languishing, and so amorous, that, with such a superiority of indecency, the world cou'd no longer doubt of what she so much wanted them to believe. As we walk'd along she heard my person very much commended, this added greatly to the charms of her victory. But what signified her triumph over *Mongennes*, if I still persisted in taking no manner of notice of all she was doing for me. Careless and thoughtful, scarcely did I vouchsafe an answer, to the many questions she pester'd me with. *Versac* had so positively assur'd her I was greatly in love with her, that she cou'd not conceive what hinder'd me from declaring my mind. Sensible she cou'd not, without exposing herself to *Mongennes's* railery, come to explanations; she resolv'd, however, at any rate to make me say something. What *Versac* had told her of *Madam Lursay's* designs upon me, and my willingness to forward them, that instant occur'd to her mind. She imagin'd she cou'd satisfy her doubts without bringing herself into question; she ask'd me then, in a careless manner, if it were long since I had known *Madam Lursay*? I answer'd her, there had been a friendship subsisting between her and my mother for a considerable time. I thought her acquaintance of a much later date; I was even assur'd she

ſhe had taken particular pains to make herſelf agreeable to you. To me, Madam, I proteſt I am ignorant of her ever having had ſuch a thought. Perhaps you did not care to give much attention to it — is it ſo? You had like to have forgot that. Perhaps too you have lov'd her; at a certain age, in matters of love every thing goes down; 'tis a pity. One's ſubject ſometimes to unaccountable likings, either becauſe it is inſiſted on, or that one is too young to have learn'd to ſay — no — ; young men are always eager for intrigues, and the quickeſt concluded are counted the ſweeteſt. Love ſubſiſts for a time, but the eyes open at laſt, one ſees what has been poſſeſſed, wearineſs enſues, then ſhame, and at length deſertion; thus, in all probability, you have paſſ'd your time with Madam *Lurſay*. Madam, I have no doubt but Madam *Lurſay* has a very great friendship for me; but — now, you are going to be diſcreet, interrupted ſhe, and it will only be out of pure vanity. I do not believe that can be his reaſon, ſaid *Mongennes*, he wou'd be very unjuſt to Madam *Lurſay*, if he thought ſo ill of her; for my part, I am far from thinking that ſhe or any body elſe ſhou'd be in the leaſt ſurpriz'd at his liking her. You really think ſo! Madam, replied the other in a pitying tone, your taſte is always particular! There was a day perhaps when ſhe might have had her charms, but that day is paſt, no body is in being now, that was then. 'Tis not, however, ſo very long ago, reply'd Madam *Mongennes*, but you may remember it; I myſelf have

have not forgot those days. I suppose then, Madam, you have no mind to be thought young.

THEY had got thus far into polite abuse, when we espied *Versac*. *Senanges* call'd to him, he join'd us; but not with that air of freedom and ease I admir'd him so much for, and which I in vain endeavour'd to imitate. It seem'd as if the presence of *Mongennes* constrain'd him, and that he stood in as much awe of her, as the rest of the sex did of him.

My dear Lord, said *Senanges*, pray take my part against this lady, who has been for these two hours maintaining the most unheard-of things. I don't at all doubt it, answer'd he very gravely; with a superior understanding, there is nothing be it ever so whimsical or even absurd, that may not be supported with success. Well,——and pray what is the dispute? You know Madam *Lursay*? Intimately, Madam, she's a lady in the highest esteem, all the world is sensible of her agreeableness and virtue. This lady, insists upon it, that it still may be decent to love Madam *Lursay*. For my part said *Versac*, I shou'd think that, wou'd rather shew a generosity and greatness of soul, than any thing else. So I said; for there is no such thing, as being attach'd to a person of Madam *Lursay*'s age without injuring one's self essentially. You are quite in the right, there's nothing more certain. There are a thousand generous actions of the kind, which a man cannot perform without exposing himself, and which the world never countenances. What do

do you mean, Sir? said *Mongennes*, surely extraordinary likings are every day excus'd: The more fantastical, the more they are gloried in; wou'd you have——True, Madam, interrupted he, not only they are excus'd, but, what's worse, they are approv'd of; and you know I can give testimony of this. But the world is not always so complaisant as it has been to me.

It wou'd not indeed, as you say, be complaisant, replied *Mongennes*, and I add, it wou'd be extremely unjust, if no man is to love Madam *Lursay*, without being reflected on. I own, she's not in the bloom of youth; but how many women do we see every day, much less youthful than her, inspire, or at least endeavour to inspire sentiments of love? There's no doubt of that, said *Versac*, but at the same time, does not all the world cry out against them?

As to that particular, said *Senanges*, I believe there are few women such as Madam *Mongennes* has describ'd; at a certain age every woman knows she must do herself justice. Very right, said *Versac*, but methinks no one ever arrives to that time of life, and women commonly die of old age, while they are yet in expectation of its coming. I know several that are grown vastly old, and who are of course, become very ugly, yet are by no means sensible of it; they believe in their consciences they still have all the charms of youth, because they still feel an inclination to all its extravagancies. Madam *Lursay*
say

say exactly! cried *Senanges*, to mistake an inclination to extravagancies for charms! A palpable hit I protest. How many women are pictur'd by that one touch? It represents a thousand to me at once. I believe, not all it resembles, said *Mongennes*, and you attribute it to several no ways concern'd in it, among the rest to Madam *Lursay*, who I am sure is neither old nor ridiculous. I cannot conceive what shou'd make you so opinionated, Madam, said *Senanges*, you tire my patience: Let us not talk of her ridicules, they are sufficiently prov'd already; but come——tell me exactly how old she is? Why then, Madam, said *Versac*, in truth she is but forty; I insist every where she is more, because I don't love her enough to grant her only her own age. But forty! impossible Sir, she can't be so little, you must mistake; I remember—— Madam, interrupted he, calumny can do no more than make her forty five; I cannot go a day farther. And now will you be so good as to tell me, what has occasion'd this obliging dissertation on Madam *Lursay*?

WHY Sir, replied *Senanges*, the unaccountable liking Monsieur *Meilcour* has taken to her. O Madam! answer'd he with a mysterious air, with ever so little regard for a person, one shou'd never say those things out loud, and indeed, one shou'd avoid thinking them; but human weakness does not admit of so much perfection. I know no-body whom such a deed, were it aver'd for truth, wou'd not ruin for ever in the eyes of the world,

Monfieur

Monfieur *Meilcour*, no doubt, esteems, refpects, has even a veneration, if you please, for Madam *Lurfay*, but the danger wou'd be too great, for him to be fo much as fufpected of any thing elfe. You plead better for him than he does for himfelf, faid *Senanges*; by his f Silence you fee he admits the accusation to be juft; the very fubject embarrafles him. I don't at all wonder at that, faid *Versac*, for probably he is tir'd of hearing fo much of it. But as to his being embarrafs'd I do not fee what you can conclude from thence. To be embarrafs'd by an accusation, is not confeffing the crime: 'Tis true, Madam *Lurfay* entertains fome tender fentiments for him, but who, in this world, is not expos'd to fuch accidents? Can any man pretend to anfwer for all the paffions he infpires? And provided they are defpifed, provided they are render'd unfortunate, when our dignity forbids us to countenance them, what can any body have to object? For my own part, I am fully convinc'd Monfieur *Meilcour*'s conduct has been fuch, that he has not the fmalleft complaifance to reproach himfelf. So much the worfe, if that be true, faid *Mongennes*, I do not fee where he can do better, at leaft I can fee where he wou'd do infinitely worfe,

NOTWITHSTANDING the great and unhappy deference I have to all you fay, I cannot poffibly think as you do Madam, faid *Versac*. For your part, continued he turning to *Senanges*, I wonder how you can be fo ignorant of his choice, as to have
any

any thing to reproach him on Madam *Lursay's* account. Who me? cried she; I protest to you, and I am sincere, he never yet imparted any thing to me. No matter for that, Madam, you whom I have seen discover things much more hidden than the secret of his heart, can't you for this once have recourse to your usual penetration? For pity's sake guess what we wou'd be at. No Sir, said she, that wou'd not be so proper: when he has intrusted me with his sufferings, it will be time enough to think of giving him an answer. Come Sir, said *Versac* to me, communicate your secrets to her, you are a happy mortal; but added he, observing me greatly confounded, these sort of confidences are seldom made before witnesses. Lord! I wonder what this mighty secret can be? said *Senanges*, for my part I cannot comprehend it. I am sorry for that, said *Versac*, for if you do not pretend to know something of the matter, I can tell you you'll have nothing said to you. Now you are sensible, Madam, said *Mongennes*, this important secret cannot escape you long. How comes it then, said she with an affected carelessness, that I am still kept in the dark.

I COULD almost venture to tell it you now, said *Versac*; but where do you sup to night? In the suburbs? I do, answer'd she, but not at my own house: Madam *Mongennes* and I are engag'd to lady *F——*. I wish you wou'd be of the party.

I CAN'T

I CAN'T poffibly, I am to fop in the fuburbs too, but not at your end. Some tender engagement I fuppose? Tender! no, I cannot fay tender.

Is it always the fame pretty little M*****? 'Twou'd be very extraordinary it fhould be always her, for I never had her. What folly! cried *Mon-gennes*, to deny what all the world knows, and is tired of talking thefe two months paff.

I HAVE one favour to beg of your ladyfhip, which is, that you will be graciously pleas'd to think fometimes, that I have neither had all the women, nor all the oddities that have been afcrib'd to me. 'Tis then fome old affair, faid *Senanges*. No, for I put an end to one this morning. May I afk you to whom you are attach'd at prefent? To whom! why to the neweft, ay, to the very neweft of all.

PERHAPS you don't know who fhe is, reply'd he, which wou'd be extraordinary; but you will foon hear it in every body's mouth, tho' I really imagin'd it was already pretty publick. This affair began with great vivacity at the opera, was carried on elfewhere, and is to be concluded to night at my villa. A moft charming place that Villa of mine! I infift upon giving you an entertainment there before it be long. Nothing can be more gallant, faid *Mon-gennes*; is it? — Yes Madam, interrupted he, 'tis ftill in the fame place. Well — and do you accept

accept of the invitation? An entertainment at your Villa! said *Senanges*, you do not consider Sir; those are the parties that are call'd indecent, and which the world very justly blames.

A FINE story indeed! replied *Versac*, and tho' it be certain they are found fault with, is that a reason for refusing them? Hide yourself ever so close, will the publick undertake the less to find you out? Whatever regard, whatever deference you pay to the world, are you not sure of being spoke of? But after all, for my part, I know nothing so decent as a Villa, no place where you are less expos'd to those discourses you seem to apprehend. I even begin to think that a love of decorum, still more than necessity, has brought them into fashion.

At a Villa, two persons may sup tête à tête without scandal, and no engagement now-a-days can be form'd without that resource. Does it not make up one of the first articles? A woman who has a regard for herself, that is to say, who has a mind to conceal the weakness or folly of a tender heart, or a licentious mind, how can she pretend to impose on the world without the help of a Villa? What can be more pure, less liable to interruption, less known, than the pleasures there tasted? both reliev'd from the troublesome forms of grandeur, and at a distance from those sumptuous apartments, where love either grows quarrelsome or languid; their inclinations are in continual warmth, and their passions constantly

constantly reviving. There under an humble roof, defires, half ftifled by worldly diffipations, rekindle, and are fatisfied without being extinguish'd.

AN! my lord, faid *Senanges* laughing, were it true that a Villa had this laft vertue, who wou'd ever live in a palace? I do not fay poffitively they never extinguish, but it is certain one may indulge them there longer than any where elfe. That is ftill gaining something, faid ſhe, but before we accept of your entertainment, you muſt both come and ſup at my houſe as ſoon as I return from *Verſailles*, which will be in a very few days; *Verſac*, I'll ſend you word. To me! Madam, you forget what a ſhort memory I have, I ſhou'd omit ſending this gentleman notice: Write to him yourſelf, that's the politeſt and the ſureſt way, then he will be ſo good as to let me know the evening you appoint. With all my heart, ſaid ſhe, 'twill be but a billet of no conſequence. Faith! Madam, you are grown intolerable with your niceties about decorum, I ſee no body ſtretch them ſo far as you do: You'll become ridiculous at laſt; to be ſure, it is not amiſs to be a little watchful over oneſelf; but too much preciſeneſs is really diſagreeable: I fear much you will dwindle at laſt into a prude. No, no, Sir, a prude I never ſhall be, it is not in my nature, but I own I abominate indecency: To be indecent is ſhocking, I never can be reconcil'd to it. 'Tis impoſſible for a lady of your ſenſe and good breeding to think otherwiſe; but prithee be not frighten'd at that ſame billet, take my word there

there is nothing more common. Will you do me the favour to come, Sir, said she turning to me. I wish it may be in my power, Madam, I am not certain but I shall be gone to the country with my mother before your return.

By no means, Sir, said *Versac*, you must either not go to the country, or promise to be back at that time: In so charming a situation as yours, a man seldom thinks of those dutiful parties.

VERSAC might have easily perceiv'd by my discontented looks, that all he said made no manner of impression on me; and *Senanges* seem'd greatly alarm'd at my objection. However, *Versac*, who was determin'd to take me from Madam *Lursay*, insisted so much upon my agreeing to the supper-party, that at last I was forced to consent, but fully resolv'd to break my word, since I had been compell'd to give it.

I WAS greatly dissatisfied to find myself engag'd against my inclination, and was now more convinc'd than ever, that *Senanges*, notwithstanding her fine speech against indecency, was really what I took her to be at first sight; the gloomy thoughtfulness which attended these reflections, she interpreted a serious meditation on my approaching happiness.

How delighted I am with your complaisance! said she to me tenderly; you are a charming man! indeed you are, a most charming man! But why don't

don't you tell me, you will be glad to fee me again? I fhall, Madam, anfwer'd I coldly. I know not, continued ſhe, whether I ought to tell you that I fhall think of you with pleaſure; I fear you are not very anxious about what I might ſay to you on that ſubject. Pray why ſo, Madam, replied I. Why ſo! ſaid ſhe, that's a thing I cannot yet let you know. Nevertheless——But what uſe will you make of what I ſhall tell you?

RACK'D with vexation and impatience, I was juſt, I think, going to beg ſhe wou'd impart nothing to me, when in the turning of the walk I ſaw Madam *Lurſay*, *Hortenfia*, and her mother coming towards us. The confuſion that ſeiz'd me at this unexpected fight, is not to be deſcrib'd. Tho' I had not the leaſt thought of *Hortenfia*'s loving me, I was in deſpair to think that, after quitting her ſo abruptly, ſhe ſhou'd find me in company with Madam *Senanges*. Madam *Lurſay*'s preſence too gave me ſome uneaſineſs tho' I was no longer in any dread of her diſpleaſure. Her accuſation of falſhood before *Hortenfia*, and our laſt quarrel, had ſo irritated me againſt her, that I baniſh'd all thoughts of a reconciliation, which I fear'd in its conſequences; but I trembled to think of what ſhe might ſay of me. Without diſcovering her private motives for commenting upon my intimacies with *Senanges*, and expert enough to ſhadow over her reflections with the plauſible pretext of anxiety for my welfare, ſhe might bring *Hortenfia* to think them not innocent, and tho' all ſhe cou'd ſay ſhou'd never

never be sufficient to banish me from her heart, access to it might be for ever debar'd me. In vain I strove to hide my inquietudes; every look, every action betray'd me; I did not dare to lift up my eyes on *Hortensia*, and yet I cou'd turn them no where else; a secret invincible charm fix'd them on her, in spite of me.

MADAM *Lursay* seem'd overwhelm'd with grief, but, accustom'd to a command of herself, her countenance clear'd up in proportion as she advanc'd towards us, she return'd my salute with the greatest ease and freedom. *Hortensia*, whom I examin'd attentively, shew'd neither disturbance or pleasure in seeing me. From all sides I heard the greatest encomiums on her charms, this at once inflam'd my love and augmented my sorrows. We pass'd by one another without saying a word.

THAT'S the lady then, said *Mongennes*, looking at Madam *Lursay*, who is no longer to be lov'd but out of generosity? 'Tis extraordinary indeed, if, with so many charms, she's not to be allow'd one hour. Alas! Madam, said *Senanges*, such is her misfortune, and all your wondering will never make it otherwise. Can nothing, Sir, continued she, addressing herself to me, dissipate your melancholy? Is Madam *Lursay* to run for ever in your head? I have already told you, Madam, she has no power over my heart; another idea possesses it too strongly ever to suffer it to be divided; and were that passion to make me miserable all the days
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of my life, with pleasure I feel it never can be erased from my foul.

THE force of love gave me an energy of expression, which Madam *Senanges* misunderstood. Her eyes sparkled with fire. You miserable! said she, what shou'd make you so? How can you harbour such a thought? Has any thing been done to make you apprehend it? Be constant, but let it be always with a certainty of being happy. I perceiv'd her mistake, but did not take the trouble of undeceiving her: 'Twas of no consequence to me she shou'd think I lov'd her, I was certain of making her soon sensible of the contrary.

VERSAC, who had been amusing himself with contradicting *Mongennes*, that instant rejoin'd us. What's come over Madam *Mongennes*, said he, has any thing extraordinary happen'd her, her head's turn'd. She insists Madam *Lursay* is handsome, and wonders how any body can think Miss *Theville* has charms. As to this last particular, said *Senanges*, I am pretty much of her mind; Miss *Theville* has more shew than beauty, more of a certain air than a genteel figure, take her all together, she will scarce bear examination. And I, said *Versac*, who have a tolerable judgment in these matters, can find but one fault with her; she has an air of too much modesty: But a knowledge of the world will probably cure her of that, and wou'd I were to be the first to teach her a new doctrine! Give her a sensible look too if you can, said *Mongennes*;

gennes; take from her those gogling inanimated eyes, she seems not to know what to do with; put some meaning and vivacity into them; that wou'd really be a work of charity, and the more commendable, that I am sure it is next to an impossibility. If you thought it less difficult, it wou'd be infinitely more so, said *Versac*, and the manner in which you speak of her, is a sure sign she wants no perfection.

FILL'D with indignation at the low envious expressions of these two women, and nettled to hear Miss *Theville*'s beauty cried-down, I cou'd contain no longer. In reality Sir, said I, to *Versac*, Miss *Theville* is too handsome not to be found some fault with: It is much safer to praise Madam *Lursay*, she will leave more admirers for other people.

THE contemptuous air with which I pronounced these words, cou'd not but be disagreeable to *Mon-gennes*; but I might have been a thousand times more disobliging, without incurring her displeasure: She had only suspended, not abandon'd her projects; and tho' she no longer affected that prodigious sprightliness, which had alarm'd *Senanges*, and her desire of engaging me was in appearance abated, the same ardour still subsisted in her soul. She judg'd, by the coldness of my behaviour, that I had no love for *Senanges*, and too foolish not to be excessively vain, she made no doubt but my heart was hers, whenever she pleas'd to command it. I was satisfied of her expectations by her attentions, and cer-
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tain looks which I began to underftand, without being in the leaft mov'd.

SINCE I had met Mifs *Theville*, *Senanges*'s company was become much more infupportable than before ; but ftill fearing ſhe ſhou'd imagine I was impatient to join Madam *Lurfay*, I ſeem'd not in a hurry to leave her. Luckily I was not long under this constraint, ſhe went away in a ſhort time after, recommending to me very preſſingly not to forget her, and aſſuring me ſhe wou'd not fail to write to me as ſoon as ſhe return'd from *Versailles*. I parted from her and *Versac*, with as firm a reſolution of avoiding her for the future, as of ſeeking an opportunity of ſeeing him again.

I WAS no ſooner at liberty but I went in ſearch of Mifs *Theville*. Tho' greatly I ſuffer'd by her coldneſs, I ſuffer'd ſtill more by her abſence: The pangs of jealouſie ſeem'd to encrease when I had her not before my eyes: I imagin'd ſhe was continually thinking of *Germeuil*, that her ſoul enjoy'd with too much tranquillity, an idea I thought ſo very dear to her: I hop'd that at leaſt my preſence wou'd hinder her from being ſo entirely wrapt up in him as I fear'd ſhe was: In fine, and without all theſe motives, I was impatient to ſee her again, tho' again I was to be the ſorrowful witneſs of all her love for my rival.

I SAW her at length, coming down my ſide of the walk. At ſight of me Madam *Lurfay* bluſh'd ;
but,

but, indifferent how she stood affected, I sought my destiny in *Hortensia's* eyes. She seem'd to see me approach like one in whom she took no sort of interest; I had reason to believe by her looks, that it was equal to her whether I was in her's or Madam *Senanges's* company. These fresh proofs of indifference pierc'd me to the heart.

WHILST I was contemplating *Hortensia*, Madam *Lursay* look'd earnestly at me, and with a sort of a jibing air, which I perceiv'd at last, but that serv'd only to redouble the aversion I had to her. I knew all she cou'd have to say, and the reflections she had already made on *Senanges* and me. What had pass'd between us was, as yet, too much a secret, for her to constrain herself upon that account. She might, without exposing herself, talk as freely as she pleas'd of this new passion she imagin'd I had conceiv'd, nay, I was almost certain she had already spoke of it: And had we been alone I shou'd have been less embarrass'd about an explanation, wherein I shou'd have prov'd to her that I had as little esteem as love left for her; but Madam *Theville's*, and *Hortensia's* presence, gave her an advantage over me, which I cou'd not deprive her of, without renouncing all decorum.

WELL! Sir, said she still gibing, methinks that violent head-ach did not last long. No, Madam, walking has dissipated it. Is it intirely to your walk, Sir, that we are to attribute so sudden a cure, and have you no obligations to Madam *Senanges*.

anges. I was not fenfible of owing her any, but fince you are fo good, Madam, as to put me in mind of my duty, I fhall be fure to thank her the firft time I have the pleafure of meeting her. If I am not miftaken, Sir, you will have occafion more than once for all your acknowledgments; the abundance of that lady's good-nature is not confin'd to fo narrow a compafs: Madam *Senanges* has a very generous foul. But how can you poffibly ftay here when ſhe's gone? Perhaps, Madam, replied I with a fownereſs that began to get the better of me, perhaps it was not in my power to follow her; but a certainty of ſeeing her again very ſoon, ſoftens extremely the difagreeableneſs of her abſence.

MADAM *Lurſay* answer'd me with a ſcornful look, which rais'd my indignation to the higheſt. Without ſaying a word we made each other ſenſible of our mutual diſdain. But this ſort of language was not ſufficient for her: Thinking to mortify me by reviling *Senanges*, ſhe employ'd all her ſkill, in painting her vices and follies in the ſtrongeſt colours. She cou'd not poffibly think worſe of her than I did; but far from allowing her to abuſe her as ſhe thought proper, I determin'd to exaſperate her, by taking *Senanges*'s part; which I did ſo warmly, and with ſo little caution, that it was impoſſible for Madam *Lurſay* to doubt any longer of a paſſion ſhe had before only ſuſpected me of. Blinded with anger and reſentment, I thought it not enough to prove only that I eſteem'd *Senanges*, I ſpoke of her as if I believ'd her young, handsome
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and witty, and all this with an extasie usual in the commencement of an amour.

I PERCEIV'D by Madam *Lursay*'s agitations, that I had convinc'd her she had lost me for ever. For an instant I tasted all the sweets of revenge; but I felt, when it was too late, how dearly I had bought them. Regardless of every thing but the pleasure of mortifying Madam *Lursay*, I forgot I was in the presence of *Hortensia*, and that I cou'd not persuade the one I lov'd *Senanges*, without giving the same idea to the other. This thought, which occur'd at last, made me most miserable. 'Till this unfortunate piece of rashness, I had nothing but *Hortensia*'s coldness to combat; with what confidence cou'd I now speak to her of my love, after confessing *Senanges* to be the mistress of my heart? Was it proper for me to have acquainted her with my reasons for persisting in the praises of a woman, who, I knew, deserv'd nothing but contempt? cou'd I, without incurring her disdain, justify myself at Madam *Lursay*'s expence, and betray the secrets of her heart? I, who thought myself bound in honour not to suffer the least hint tending that way to escape me?

THE more I consider'd myself oblig'd to secrecy, the fewer hopes I had of extricating myself out of the disagreeable situation my folly had brought me into. Tho' *Hortensia* seem'd no ways concern'd at all I had said, I know not what idea, for which there was no manner of foundation, but
that

that nevertheless I cou'd not divest myself of, gave life to my expectations. Certain that one day I shou'd be necessitated to justify myself to her, I already prepar'd every thing I cou'd think capable of surmounting a prejudice she might the more reasonably have conceiv'd against me, that I had seemingly taken pains to give it her. Her melancholy added still more to my uneasiness and anxiety. So extraordinary a situation as hers cou'd scarcely be owing to any thing but a secret and unfortunate passion; for were it true, as that very day I had cause to believe, that she lov'd *Germueil*, what cou'd make her so dejected? No cloud seem'd to be gathering between them, all was serene when I parted from them. Was it possible that his absence shou'd occasion such inquietudes? When a lover is to be absent for some considerable time, uneasiness may be accounted for, but when he is quickly again to bless the sight, tho' an hour is an age till he appears, his idea causes rather tender than gloomy reflections. 'Twas impossible then that *Germueil* cou'd be the chief object of her disquiet: I had no other reason to think him my rival, but that it is natural, when a rival is dreaded, to suspect the friend who seems most tenderly lov'd.

THE readiest way to have been deliver'd from all my perplexities, was to come to an explanation with *Hortensia*. This I was sensible of; but to be sensible of it did not make the method of going about an explanation more easy to me. I knew not where to begin, or how discover whether *Germueil*

was the unknown she lov'd, or whether I had some other to fear.

LOST in this confusion of ideas, contriving, ruminating, studying, unable to fix on any thing, I walk'd by *Hortensia's* side in a condition not very different from her's. Three times I was going to interrupt her meditations, and three times I stop'd, for want of something to say. With as little success I endeavour'd to catch her eyes. We arriv'd at the gate, without my having got the least information of what I so much wish'd to know.

MADAM *Lursey*, who had been silent since I had spoke *Senanges's* panegyrick, ask'd me, when Madam and Miss *Theville* were gone, whether I wou'd go home with her, or whether I wou'd be set down at my own house. The vexation she had given me that day, and *Hortensia's* coldness, made me equally averse to any thing she cou'd propose. I answer'd her shortly, I cou'd do neither. She seem'd dismay'd at this answer, and the profound serious bow with which it was accompanied; however, she still insisted. I then told her more positively than before, it was not in my power to comply with her request. At length we parted, both dejected, and greatly displeas'd with one another.

I WENT home with too heavy a heart, and too discontented a mind, to think of seeing any body; the night was spent in useless disconsolate reflections on what had pass'd in the day.

I HAD fix'd on no particular project, when a servant enter'd my room, and deliver'd me the following billet from Madam *Lursay*.

‘**W**ERE I only to consult your heart, I shou’d not give myself the trouble of writing to you, silence wou’d, no doubt, secure me from fresh insults; but more fond than vain, I venture once more to put myself in your power. I go this evening into the country for two days: You do not deserve that I shou’d give you this notice, much less that I shou’d desire you to come along with me, yet I condescend to do both. So much indulgence on my side will, perhaps, only make you more ungrateful; but, if I cannot move you to a sense of my goodness, I shall at least have the pleasure of confounding you. Besides, I am really curious to know whether you think Madam *Senanges* as charming as you did yesterday. I am complaisant enough to have some uneasiness left about your opinion on that subject. But remember it is in my power to be uneasy only as long as I please: Adieu, I shall expect you at four.’

THIS letter abated nothing of my resentment to Madam *Lursay*, with whom I was determin’d to come to no explanation; without reflecting then on this jaunt to the country, so suddenly concluded, and which I had heard nothing of the night before, I wrote to her, in the coldest manner, that I cou’d

by no means accept of her invitation, that I had been engag'd the night before, and that I cou'd not possibly break off my engagement. After what had pass'd between us, this answer was certainly impertinent, but the more I consider'd it as such, the better I was pleas'd with it. Of all my projects, that of breaking off with Madam *Lursay* was the one that most constantly possess'd my mind; cou'd I then blame myself for a denial, which, in all appearance, wou'd insure and forward our rupture?

My aversion to Madam *Lursay* was not the only reason I had for refusing to go with her. I dread-ed not so much the disagreeableness of her company, as the unhappiness in being at a distance from *Hortensia*, whom I cou'd not think of being absent from, at a time when it was of the utmost consequence to declare my love, or, at least, to be watchful over my rivals. The moments I was forced to be away from her, were all employ'd in thinking of her; scarcely had the clock struck five, when I flew to her house?

I soon arriv'd: Among other equipages in the court, I saw Madam *Lursay*'s. This was enough to make me sensible of the error I had committed, but the impossibility of repairing it, made me miserable. I cou'd no longer doubt but *Hortensia* was to be of the party I refus'd. I had wrote to Madam *Lursay* in such haughty terms, that I cou'd not go, there was no pretending to think of offering myself

myſelf now, and her motives for not aſking me again, were but too juſtifiable.

ENRAG'D againſt myſelf, I went in; but trembling and in confuſion. At ſight of me Madam *Lurſay* turn'd pale, her anger ſeem'd equal to her aſtoniſhment. Tho' I deſerv'd all her hatred, I was as much offended at the marks ſhe ſhew'd me of it, as if ſhe did me injuſtice. But ſhe was not long the ſubject of my meditation. *Hortensia* ſpeaking to *Germeuil*, the eaſe and familiarity with which ſhe liſten'd and replied to him, her ſurprize and ſudden bluſhes when I appear'd, were to me objects of contemplation too intereſting to be diverted by any other idea whatever.

You intend, I ſuppoſe Sir, to come along with us? ſaid Madam *Theville*. No, Madam, replied Madam *Lurſay* haſtily, I aſk'd him to come, but he has another engagement on his hands which he can't poſſibly break off, I believe you may gueſs where it is. Ridiculous! cried *Germeuil*, be aſſur'd, Madam, he has nothing to hinder him. I poſſitively know the contrary, reſum'd ſhe ſmartly; but time preſſes, and he will be the better pleas'd to ſee us gone, that every moment gives delay to his pleaſures. Adieu, Sir, ſaid ſhe ſmiling, I ſhall be more fortunate perhaps another time, when you have fewer occupations.

In concluding theſe words ſhe gave me her hand, with as much unconcern as if nothing had happen'd;

and I, bursting with rage, was forced to conduct her to her coach.

It wou'd be whimsical after all, said she whispering me going down stairs, if you shou'd be sorry for the answer you sent me; but that's impossible, you only know how to offend, and I do you wrong in thinking you capable of repentance. For heaven's sake! Madam, let us have no more of that subject, such discussions are no longer fit for any of us. I am thoroughly acquainted with your obliging way of answering, Sir; but I am willing to forget every thing, you have habituated me to indulgence. Only be so good as to tell me, as you are never long of the same mind, have you had any remorse? Be not afraid to own it: Have you an inclination to come? Madam, I already answer'd that question this morning. Sir, I am satisfied, and I only beg you to forget that I had presumption enough, to propose the same thing to you twice.

SHE then made me a curtsy in that shocking manner I us'd sometimes to make her a bow. In vain I strove to conceal my uneasiness. To behold *Germeuil* near *Hortensia*, to think that in the solitude of the country he wou'd find a thousand opportunities of saying the tenderest things to her, was too cruel a consideration for me to bear patiently; but what added still more to my torment, my misfortune was mostly owing to myself. Seeing them just ready to depart, I began to repent of that false bashfulness to which I had sacrific'd the dearest

est interests of my soul. I held Madam *Lursay* still by the hand, and imagin'd there cou'd be no great difficulty in obtaining from her what she had so earnestly press'd me to. So far then I got the better of my foolish vanity, that I introduc'd again some conversation about the party, which I cou'd not see go on without me, but with the greatest anguish of mind. Had you given me earlier notice, Madam, you wou'd not have found me engag'd. O! Sir, I believe so, answer'd she without looking at me.

If you have even a mind, continued I——
No, surely, Sir; interrupted she, I have no mind to any thing, I am not deserving of the smallest sacrifice you may think proper to make me, nor will I accept of any. You thought differently a moment ago, replied I, and I imagin'd I cou'd——
Then, Sir, I thought wrong, interrupted she again, now I think as I ought. Upon saying this she went into her coach. What vex'd me most in this disappointment was, that I imagin'd it was a reflection on me to have humbled myself to no purpose, by asking a favour which I had refus'd a moment before.

WHATEVER interest I had in not being absent from *Hortensia*, I concluded I ought to sacrifice it to what I ow'd to myself, and that love had even engag'd me too far; sorry then for having given Madam *Lursay* room to think she had mortified me, I stood the shock of seeing them go off with-

out me, lamenting greatly that *Hortensia*, who did not vouchsafe to speak to me, was not a witness to my last proceedings with Madam *Lursay*, and very uneasy lest she shou'd imagine I had refus'd to go, on Madam *Senanges's* account.

THEY were at some distance, before I recover'd from the disorder my unhappy situation had plung'd me into. At length, restor'd to myself, I return'd home, to meditate most profoundly on trifles, to put false constructions on every thing that had happen'd me, and abandon myself to sorrow, 'till *Hortensia's* return.

THO' I knew she was to be two days in the country, I sent the next morning to enquire if she was return'd. Tormented with impatience and jealousy, I went myself the day after, and not finding her at home, a thousand times I was tempted to follow her; but sway'd still more by vanity than love, the fear that Madam *Lursay* shou'd think I could not live without her, prevail'd, and made me remain in spite of all my inquietudes.

I WAS scarcely at home when *Versac* came to see me. Tho' the charming *Hortensia* employ'd all my thoughts, I grew weary of the solitude to which I had condemn'd myself, and was delighted to see him again. I am come to know, said he, what you have been doing with yourself these two days. There is not a place in the whole town in which I have not search'd for you.

I AM

I AM very much out of ſpirits, answer'd I. Is it poſſible that happy lovers can be caſt down? I am not ſorry to ſee you take Madam Senanges's abſence to heart; but you may be ſo certain of being belov'd—O heavens! cried I. That tragical exclamation frightens me, reply'd he; What, have you not been wrote to yet? No, ſurely, 'tis but two days, ſince ſhe went away, and you know ſhe is not to write until her return.

VERY true, but I am not the leſs ſurpriz'd you have had no news at all from her. The day before yeſterday it was ſettled, that ſhe ſhou'd write to you, and according to all rules you ſhou'd have heard ſomething from her before now. She's a charming woman, that Madam Senanges! One has never either fooliſh reflections, or affected delays to apprehend from her, in an inſtant ſhe comprehends and feels every thing.

THAT is not what wou'd recommend her to my love; to be ſomewhat determin'd in the choice of a lover, is, I ſhou'd think, more commendable, than that precipitation you ſeem to praiſe ſo much in Madam Senanges.

FORMER people thought as you do: But times are alter'd. We'll talk on that ſubject when we have more leiſure. At preſent of Madam Senanges. After the hopes you have given her, and the attendance you have paid her, I am really ſurpriz'd

surpriz'd at your indifference. Who me! have I given her hopes? You certainly have, said he very deliberately; when a man of your age visits such a woman as *Madam Senanges*, appears in public, and settles a correspondence with her, he must have some reason for all this. Such things are not usually done without a design. She certainly has a right to think you adore her. I don't care what she thinks, I shall very quickly undeceive her. There wou'd be great injustice in that, and she wou'd have just cause to complain of you. I think I may much more justly complain of her: Upon what account shou'd she think herself intitled to my heart?

To your heart! Romantick jargon. What makes you suppose she expects it? No, she's incapable of so ridiculous a pretension.

WHAT is it then she wou'd be at? A sort of an intimate commerce, said he, an animated friendship, resembling love in it's pleasures without it's foolish delicacies. In a word, she does no more than like you, and you owe her no more than a liking in return. If that be what she expects, I believe I shall be a great while in her debt. May be not, Sir, your own reason will shew you, you are in the wrong. *Madam Senanges* inspires you with nothing at this time, but you cannot help her presently appearing more amiable: 'Twill be in spite of you, I know, but so it will be; or you must renounce all custom and decorum.

I AM

I AM very certain, Sir, notwithstanding all you say, that it can never happen. People may think what they please, but I am determin'd never to have any more dealings with her. Such, with concern I perceive, is your resolution. All we have to do is to examine whether it be justifiable. But wou'd you, Sir, wou'd you yourself be willing to take up with her? Were I so unfortunate as that she shou'd insist upon it, I know not how I cou'd be off; and yet there are a thousand reasons which might excuse me. And pray, why may not I be excus'd as well as you?

You are too young, reply'd he, not to be satisfied with Madam *Senanges*; it is incumbent on you, it is your duty: Were I to condescend to any thing, 'twou'd be out of pure politeness. You are in immediate want of a woman fit to introduce you into the world; and I have the honour of introducing all those of the sex who have a mind to be celebrated. This alone shou'd make a difference between your choice and mine.

GIVE me leave to ask you one question, said I, and be not surpriz'd if, in the sequel of this conversation, I put you several. The things you tell me are too new, for me to comprehend them at once, as you wou'd have me. You must even expect to find me incredulous as often as you shall astonish me.

HAVING

HAVING nothing in view but your instruction, I shall always take a particular pleasure in clearing up your doubts, and setting the world before you in the light in which you ought to consider it. But that we may give ourselves up with the greater freedom to a subject, which from its extent and variety may lead us into a long detail, I shou'd be glad we retir'd to some private walk, where we shall not be expos'd to interruption, and I think the Star as commodious a place as any. I consented, we set out.

ON the way we talk'd of nothing but indifferent things. 'Twas at the Star we began a conversation which has had but too great an influence over all the actions of my life.

You have rais'd my curiosity, Sir, said I, will you be so kind as to satisfy it. No doubt I will, answer'd he, and am delighted with an opportunity of instructing you. There are certain things it is almost a shame to be ignorant of for any time, because they comprehend the knowledge of the world, without which, the advantages we receive from nature, far from drawing us out of obscurity, are oftentimes hurtful to us. I am sensible that this knowledge, properly speaking, is no more than a confus'd heap of trifles, that most of its principles are contrary to honour and reason; but at the same time it is despis'd, it must be acquir'd, nay, it must be applied to more carefully than to other
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leſs frivolous ſciences, ſince, to our ſhame be it ſpoken, it is leſs dangerous to fail having a good heart than fashionable manners.

You begin already to be thoughtful, continued he.

NOT ſaid I, but I am all attention to what you are ſaying, but the ſerious manner in which you treat this ſubject ſeems ſo little adapted to your character, that I cannot help being ſurpriz'd. You talk like a Philoſopher, who——Then be not ſurpriz'd, interrupted he, my friendſhip for you wou'd not allow me to deceive you any longer; and your abſolute want of inſtruction obliges me to prove to you, that I can think and reflect. At the ſame time I flatter myſelf you will keep inviolably ſecret, both what I have ſaid, and what I am going to ſay to you. How! Sir, ſaid I, cou'd you be diſpleas'd ſhou'd I happen to ſay, *Versac can think?*

No doubt I ſhou'd, answer'd he very ſeriously, and you ſhall know juſt now, of how great conſequence it is, you ſhou'd not ſay ſo of me. But to return to yourſelf.

WITH ſurprize I have taken notice on ſeveral occaſions, that you are abſolutely ignorant of the world. Young as you are, the high ſtation in which you are born, ſhou'd before now, have made you get the better of certain prejudices I ſee you govern'd by. Particularly, I wonder how you
come

come to know women so little. My remarks on the sex may be of service to you. Not that I flatter myself you can advance on sure and certain grounds by following my precepts alone; no, but they will at least weaken those notions which may keep you a long time in the dark, or perhaps hinder you from ever seeing things in a proper light.

How necessary soever it be for to you to know women, you are not to confine yourself entirely to that knowledge. That of the modes, taste, and errors of the times shou'd employ part of your study; and I must observe to you this difference, that tho' you may quickly form a just notion of women, you will not perhaps, after the most laborious application, arrive to be a thorough master of the rest.

'Tis a folly to think that the innocence of manners generally brought into the world, can be preserv'd in it; and that it is possible to continue virtuous and open-hearted, without risking reputation or fortune. The heart and mind are forced to consent to corruption; every thing is mode and affectation. Good qualities, agreeableness and talents, are arbitrary; never but by disguising yourself eternally, can you pretend to succeed in the world. Such are the principles you are never to lose sight of. But it is not enough to know that to succeed you must become ridiculous; you must study carefully the particular cast of that part of the world your rank has plac'd you in, and the follies most
suitable

fuitable to your condition, thofe, in a word, which are in credit; this ftudy requires more attention and fagacity than you are aware of.

WHAT do you underftand, faid I, by follies in credit? I underftand, faid he, fuch as depending on caprice are fubject to vary, have, like all other fashions, but a certain limited time to pleafe, and which, while they are in vogue, outfhine all others. 'Tis in the time of their reign that they are to be embrac'd: It wou'd be as fruitless to give into them when the world begins to be tir'd of them, as dangerous to adhere to them when they are proferib'd. But when the reigning tafte, faid I, is known to be ridiculous, how can a man bring himfelf to conform to it?

FEW have difcernment enough to know what it really is, and they who can think, often abandon themfelves, even upon reflection, to the errors they condemn moft in their own minds. Nay, more: Thefe abfurd opinions which reflect on the underftanding, and this affected deportment which fpoils and conftains the figure, are principally owing to thofe among us who reafon moft profoundly. I, for example, who am the inventor of moft of the oddities in fafhion, or who at leaft bring them to perfection, do you think that I felect, cherifh, and vary them merely out of caprice, and without regulating and conducting my ideas according to the knowledge I have of the world?

WITHOUT

WITHOUT knowing all the motives on which you act, answer'd I, I imagine you only invent or practise folly, because you think it a means of pleasing in society.

No doubt I do: The figure I make in the world, is I think a pretty good proof I am not mistaken, and that such a reputation as mine is only to be acquir'd by following my steps. However, be not alarm'd at the name I give to things that have the privilege of deluding. As long as any particular fully pleases, it stands in the place of every thing graceful, agreeable, nay, sensible, and is only restor'd to the name it deserves, when use has made it obsolete and tiresome.

BUT, said I, how am I to know when a once reputable folly is in its decline? By the trifling esteem it is in among the women. You have given me a very hard task to undertake. Not in the least, the art of pleasing nowadays, may be reduc'd to a few precepts, not very difficult in the practice. First, I suppose, and I think reasonably, that a man of our rank, and at our age, shou'd have no other view but to make his name conspicuous. The easiest, and at the same time, the most agreeable way of accomplishing this, is to appear in all our actions to have no regard to any thing but women, to believe no qualities amiable but those they are taken with, and that sort of genius, let it be what it will, which pleases them, the only sort that ought

to

to please. To appear fubmiffive to their wills in all things, is the only and certain way to rule over them. I cou'd eafily make you fenfible of this truth; but before I talk to you particularly of women, I have fome advice to give you, concerning the fteps you are to take, in order to please in the world, advice on which, you may the more fecurely rely, that it is grounded on felf-experience.

FIRST then, you muft lay it down as a maxim to yourfelf, that by keeping up to certain avow'd principles, you can never arrive to be more than an ordinary man, that the only way to appear new, is to deviate from them; that men admire nothing but what ftrikes them, and that fingularity alone produces that effect. *You cannot then be too fingular, that is to fay, you can never too much affect refembling no one, either in ideas or deportment. An oddity which you alone poffefs, does you more honour, than an accomplifhment which you have in common with others.

THIS is not all; you muft learn fo perfectly to difguife your character, that you may be ftudied for ever before it can be found out. Again—to the art of deceiving others, you muft add a quicknefs in detecting them; under what they wou'd appear to be, feek to difcover what they really are. Another great fault in moft people, is that eagernels they have of reducing every thing to their own character. Never feem offended at vices that are expos'd to your fight, and never boast of having detected

tected such as are thought conceal'd. It is often better to give a bad opinion of one's understanding, than to shew all one has; to cover with an air of giddiness and unconcern, an inclination to reflection, and sacrifice your vanity to your interest. We never disguise ourselves more carefully, than when we are in the presence of such men, as we think are of a prying inquisitive disposition. Their penetration keeps us in awe. At the same time we laugh at their judgment, we are unwilling they shou'd see they have more than us. Without reclaiming us, they force us to dissemble what we are, thus our oddities are thrown away upon them. When you study men, let it not be so much with a view to instruct, as to arrive at a thorough knowledge of them. Renounce the frivolous glory of giving them lessons. The more surely to become their judge, appear sometimes to imitate them, encourage them by example, by flattery, to lay themselves open to you, and bend all your faculties to an easy compliance with every opinion. Seemingly to give into absurdities ourselves, is the sure way to miss none of the absurdities of others.

You seem to me to contradict yourself, interrupted I, this last precept destroys the former, when I imitate another, do I not cease to be singular?

No r in the least; this easy pliant temper I advise, does not exclude the singularity I recommended. The one is not more necessary than the other: Without the first, you wou'd strike nobody; without
out

out the laft, you wou'd difpleafe all the world, or at leaft you wou'd lofe the benefit of all your obfervations. Besides, one is never further from feeing what you are, than when you appear to be every thing; a man of fuperior genius knows how to embellish what he picks up from others, he will even make it appear new in their eyes.

ANOTHER thing extremely neceffary in the world; be particularly mindful to found forth your own praifes. You have been told, and perhaps you have read, that its more becoming to praife others; but in this particular I think every man may be left to himfelf: For my part, I never yet met that perfon, however modeft he pretended to be, who did not in a fhort time find out the fecret of letting me know how much he esteem'd himfelf, and that no regard I cou'd have for him, cou'd ever exceed his deferts.

THE vertue I have always obferv'd practis'd in the world with leaft fuccefs, is modefty. Let us not be inwardly prejudic'd in favour of our own merit, but let us look as if we were; let a certain confidence sparkle in our eyes, animate the found of our voices, direct our minuteft turns, and diftinguifh us even in the deference we pay to others. Above all things, talk inceffantly, and always well of yourfelf: Never be afraid to fay and to repeat, that your's is a fuperior merit. Many are thought to have none, becaufe they have fome. Tho' you fhould be liften'd to with coldnefs and difguft,

disgust, tho' you shou'd be reproach'd with never losing sight of yourself, be not daunted. The man who blames you for talking too much of yourself, is only angry, because you do not give him time to talk of himself: More modest you wou'd become a martyr to his vanity. And after all, I know not whether the man who talks of himself as he thinks he deserves, be more blameable, than one who imagines that, by being silent on his own account, he makes a sacrifice to society, in short, whether there be not an infinite deal of pride in thinking oneself bound to be modest.

BE that as it will, 'tis much safer to lord it over others, than to be constantly sacrificing self love. To be over-anxious to please, shews a want of protection. Men are never so ready to judge severely of us, as when they see us servilely courting their favour. To be in awe before a man is acknowledging him our superior. The fear of displeasing him, at the same time that it flatters his vanity, gains him not over to us. The homage we pay him emboldens him to consider our failings more attentively than he dared to have done, had it not been for our own foolish condescensions. 'Tis true, he is graciously pleas'd to humour our faults, but, his goodness is an injury we might have spar'd ourselves by a proper confidence. This proud man is so complaisant as to encourage us, and at the same time he blames our vices, regards us not enough to hide his own, wou'd have thought himself happy in receiving that indulgence he is pleas'd

to

to grant, had we not been the first to submit and sue for his.

THIS is not the only inconveniency attending timidity; I mean not to speak here of that sort, which proceeds from a want of knowledge of the world, and which only constrains the mind and person for a short time; but of that timidity which, arising from a mistrust in our own abilities, or from too high an opinion of the abilities of others, disheartens us, renders us greatly inferior to ourselves, and makes us subservient to those, or at least equals them to us, whom nature had placed below us.

You can never then presume too much upon your own strength, nor sufficiently weaken that of others. And of all things, avoid having too high an opinion of the world: Never imagine a superior merit is necessary to make a figure in it. If you have any such notion, look on me, observe (for I am going to give myself as an example, and that will happen to me again sometimes) observe what becomes of me when I have a mind to please; what affectation, arrogant airs, frivolous ideas! to how many oddities, in fine, do I not submit?

Do you imagine I have condemn'd myself without reflection to the perpetual torment of disguise? Launch'd early into the world, I soon found out, and readily seiz'd the bias. Solid good qualities I saw proscrib'd, or at least ridicul'd, and women,

sole

sole judges of our merit, allow none but what was conformable to their ideas. . Certain, that without perishing, I cou'd not resist the torrent, I suffer'd myself to be carried along with it. I gave up every thing to the frivolous; in order to appear with greater lustre, I became thoughtless and inconsiderate; in short, I ingender'd every vice necessary to please. Matters so well conducted, cou'd not fail of success.

NATURALLY I am so different from what I appear, that I did not, 'till after great strugglings with myself, bring my mind to its present situation. I us'd sometimes to blush at my own impertinence; I slander'd, with fear and trembling. A fop, no doubt I was, but as yet an ungraceful one, without brightness, like a great many others, and infinitely below that eminence I have since attain'd to.

UNQUESTIONABLY it is an easy matter to be a fop, since whoever is afraid of becoming one, must be continually on his guard, and yet there is no man without his share of some sort of foppery; but the difficulty is to acquire that sort which was necessary for me: That bold singular foppery, which having no model, is alone worthy to serve as one.

FOR whatever advantages arise from foppery, you are not to think that it alone is sufficient, and that a man who is sincerely, and not on certain principles a fop, can make such progress as one who can descant upon foppery, and who devoting
his

his time to the feducing of others, and carrying impertinence to its utmoft limits, is not intoxicated with fuccefs, and never forgets what he ought to think of himfelf. A fop of a narrow genius, who really imagines he has all the merit he fays he has, will never arrive to be confiderable.

You cannot conceive how much wit and fenfe are requifite to command a fplendid and lafting fuccefs, in a courfe where you have fo many competitors to encounter, and where the caprice of a fingle woman is often enough to eftablifh the reputation of a man, who in every other refpect is unworthy of attention. What vaft penetration is neceffary to hit off at once the character of the woman you intend to attack, or whom you have a mind to compel (which is infinitely more flattering, and does not fail to happen fometimes) to make the firft advances ! How juft, how feafonable muft you be, not to miftake the ridicule proper to be display'd before her, in order to make her comply the quicker ! How much ingenuity, how many wiles are neceffary to carry on feveral intrigues at the fame time, which for your own credit muft not be hid from the public, but which, you muft carefully conceal from each of the women you are intimate with ! Does it not require a great variety and extent of genius to be always, and without constraint, ready to affume the character the prefent moment requires ? Tender with the delicate ; fenfual with the voluptuous ; gallant with the coquet ; to exprefs paffion without

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loving ;

loving; shed tears without being mov'd; upbraid without being jealous; yet such are the parts you are to act, and each of these characters you are to put on as occasion makes them necessary. Not to mention how indispensable it is, to have a thorough usage of the world, in order to find out what women really are, in spite of all the care they can take to disguise themselves, and to believe no more in the false virtue they oppose at first to your desires, than in the eagerness they shew to preserve you after they have yielded.

THIS wonderful detail, said I, terrifies me, I am certain I shall never be able to bear such a burthen. It is not, I own, made for every man's shoulders; but I have a better opinion of your genius, than you have yourself, and I make no doubt but I shall shortly see you sharing with me the attention of the public. But to proceed.

I HAVE told you, you can never talk too much of yourself: To this precept I add another of no less importance; you cannot, in general, be too fond of assuming the conversation to yourself. 'Tis not essential in the world to wait before we speak, 'till our imagination supplies us with ideas. Wou'd we shine, 'tis only having a mind to it. The order, or rather the abuse of words, makes amends for any defect of understanding. I have seen many shallow fellows, who cou'd neither think nor speak sense, absolute strangers to accuracy and gracefulness, but who deliver'd themselves with an air of understanding in things
they

they understood leaft, join a volubility of tongue to impertinence in behaviour, lie as often as they told a ftory, yet get the better of men of good fenfe, who modelt, natural, and fond of truth, equally defpifed their lies and bombaftic jargon. Remember then, that accomplifhments, and the beft of talents are render'd ufelefs by modelt; that while you confider of what you are to fay, you lofe your opportunity of fpeaking, and that you muft ftun, in order to perfuade.

I REMEMBER, faid I, to have feen fuch men as you describe; but they were fo far from being counted agreeable, I imagin'd they were fhewn all the contempt they deferv'd, and were look'd upon to be as infupportable as they really were.

SAY, answer'd he, that their oddities were found fault with; that they were even laugh'd at; but, notwithstanding this, that they did not please, is abfolutely contradicted by experience. For fuch are the advantages of ridicule, it wins and misleads the very perfons who cry out moft againft it.

OF all the ridiculous men now in vogue, none are fo univerfally prevailing, particularly among the women, as your rattles. Women never look upon a paffion to be real, unlefs it begins by throwing them into extafies. Thofe attachments which are cemented by friendship and frequent intercourfes, feldom pafs with them for more than conveniencies, unworthy of any extraordinary attention. An im-

passion made by slow degrees, never kindles into a sprightly flame. To inspire a woman with the ardours of love, she must not know what it is that prompts her to tenderness. She has been told that a strong passion shou'd begin by violent agitations; this notion is too strongly imbib'd ever to be departed from. Nothing so proper to create in their souls this extatic pain, as that infatuation of yourself, which making you boldly attempt every thing, gives life to the charms of your person, or at least hides its defects. Women first admire; then are astonish'd, next enchanted, and because they will not allow themselves time for reflection, they imagine your charms have depriv'd them of it. But if, by chance, they shou'd think of resisting, 'twill only serve to convince them more fully, that it is to no purpose to pretend to oppose so prevailing, so sudden, so unaccountable a thing as sympathy. A well imagin'd pretence, in the main, for surrendering instantly without giving a bad opinion of themselves, for there is no man who is not more flatter'd by inspiring a violent passion at once, than by kindling one by degrees.

WHATEVER advantages attend impudence and assurance, said I, I doubt whether I can ever bring myself to embrace a system which wou'd lay me under a necessity of concealing the virtues I may be endow'd with, in order to cloak myself with vices I am not addicted to.

WITH

WITH regard to morality, what you fay is perfectly right; but morality and the world do not always agree, and you will find that the commonest way of fucceeding in the latter, is by renouncing the former. I repeat it once more, it is better to join in, or at leaft to comply with, the vices and errors of the times, than to fhew virtues which wou'd appear foreign, or not of the right caft.

OF the right caft! replied I. Perhaps you know not what I mean by that word, faid he, with a gibling air. I will own to you, I have been often teaz'd with the expreffion, answer'd I, and diflik'd it the more that nobody yet could give me a definition of it. This caft which diftinguiſhes good company, and is fo celebrated, what does it imply? They who expect it every where, and fo feldom find it either in perfons or things, are they of it themſelves? In fine, what is this caft?

A VERY puzzling queſtion, answer'd he. It is a term, a way of ſpeaking, every one makes uſe of, and nobody underſtands. What you and I are to call the *caſt of good company*, is our own caſt, and we muſt firmly reſolve to grant it to none but ſuch as think, ſpeak, and act as we do. For my part, until I hear a better definition, I ſhall make it conſiſt in the eaſe and ſplendor of *ridicule*; and now, by telling you how you are to attain to this Caſt, you ſhall judge whether my definition be juſt.

A NEGLIGENCE of deportment which before women must be carried to indecency, and passes among men for ease and freedom: Manners affected, and a conceited delivery, whether the subject requires vivacity or the languishing strain: A frivolous satirical turn of wit, a conversation embarrass'd with twisted phrases; these, or I am mistaken, are the things that compose the *reigning Cast of good company*. But these ideas are too general for you, let us enlarge on them.

HE that wou'd be admitted into this society, must avoid saying too often sensible things: How naturally soever he may express himself, and how little soever he may value himself on what he says, it will be thought affected and presumptuous to talk differently from the rest of the world, and a man who has the misfortune of being subject to this inconveniency, is not allow'd to have sense, but to be a pretender to it.

THE wit of the age consisting entirely in slander, care has been taken to give it a particular turn, and a man of the *right Cast* is better known by his manner of slander, than any thing else. In this he can never be too severe, nor too refined. On all occasions, even when he has no thoughts of, nor any provocation for, railing, he cannot put on too sarcastical an air, nor use too gibing an accent. Nothing embarrasses another more, and gives an higher opinion of your wit and humour. Let your
smiles

ſmiles be contemptuous, let an inſipid ſtarchneſs reign in all you ſay. With ſuch auxiliaries, be your merit in all other reſpects ever ſo little, you are diſtinguiſh'd becauſe you are fear'd, becauſe, in the world, a fool who has a turn for gibling and ſatyr, is more reſpected than a man of ſenſe, who too much above ſuch vile objects to deſcend to them, laughs within himſelf at the follies of the age, and has ſuch a contempt of 'em, that he thinks it not worth his while to exclaim loudly againſt them.

THAT noble negligence thought neceſſary in manners, however commendable, ſignifies but little if you do not likewise neglect your underſtanding. Perſons of the *right Caſt*, leave to the vulgar the trouble of thinking, and the fear of thinking wrong. Moreover, perſuaded that the more a genius is cultivated, the further it is from nature, in conſequence of this reaſoning, they confine themſelves to a ſet of frivolous ideas, which they are continually advancing; and if it ſhou'd happen by chance, that they have acquir'd ſome knowledge, it is ſo ſuperficial, they pride themſelves ſo little on it, that it's impoſſible to ridicule them on that ſcore. As nothing is more inglorious to a woman than to be vertuous, ſo nothing is more unbecoming one of the *right Caſt*, than to paſs for a man of letters. But what is more extraordinary, notwithſtanding this profound ignorance to which cuſtom has condemn'd him, he muſt venture boldly to decide on every ſubject ſtarted before him.

THAT really must be very embarrassing, said I. Less than you imagine. Profound ignorance with much modesty, wou'd, no doubt, be troublesome; but with a good stock of assurance, believe me, there's nothing in it. Besides, before whom do we generally speak, that we shou'd be uneasy about what we say? If our society have a privilege of deciding every thing, it does not follow, that we are to make good our decisions, and justify the good opinion we have of ourselves. To know nothing, yet to conceit one knows every thing; to despise, or praise excessively every thing we see, let it be deserving or not; to think ourselves equally cut out for the serious and the humorous; never to be afraid of being ridiculous, yet to be always so; refin'd in expression, childish in idea; launch into absurdities, support them, return often to them; this, this is the true right Cast of extreme good company.

ONE thing you say puzzles me greatly, interrupted I; how can men who have learn'd nothing, or who have thought themselves oblig'd to forget every thing, constantly find something to say? They must indeed have very fertile imaginations, who can support a perpetual conversation, without the helps to be had from divers sciences. For, in fine, I never see any body at a loss for a subject.

THE reason of that is, because they have not a fund to search it to the bottom. You have observ'd

serv'd that nobody is ever at a lofs, have you not remark'd too, that they converse without faying any thing; that a few favourite words, fome refin'd fentences, and loud fallies, infipid fmiles, and cunning looks, fupply the place of every thing? But, added I, they are eternally arguing.

TRUE, they argue, but they never reafon, and in this confifts our fublime. Can a thought be purfued, without growing dull? 'Tis in any one's power to offer one, but who has leifure to eftablifh it? Wou'd not fuch an attempt be even an infringement of decorum? No doubt,——the lefs connection, the more fprightlinefs in converfation. He who talks of war, muft fuffer himfelf to be interrupted by a lady who has a mind to talk of love; ſhe, in her turn, in the midft of all the ideas of fo noble a fubject, and which ſhe, ſuch a miſtreſs of it, can inſpire, muft hold her tongue, to liſten to a ſmutty ſong; he or ſhe that ſings it, to the grief of the whole company, muft give way to a fragment of morality, which every one is in haſte to interrupt, that they may loſe nothing of a ſcandalous ſtory, which, tho' attended to with the greateſt pleaſure, ill, or well told, is cut ſhort by ſome obſolete reflections on muſick and poetry; which by degrees diſappear, and are ſucceeded by political notions on government; theſe are unexpectedly abridg'd, by a recital of ſome extraordinary chances at play; at length, a petit-maitre, after ſome moſt profound meditations on nothing, ſtarts up, runs acroſs the room, diſcompoſes every body, to

go tell a lady at a considerable distance from him, that she has not put on paint enough, or that he thinks her as beautiful as an angel.

A WHIMSICAL picture indeed, said I. Not the less resembling, I affirm to you; and is sufficient to prove, that there is no man who may not, by the help of his own vanity, and the consideration of the sterility of others, find reason to be less dissatisfied at his own want of abilities, and, even in spite of nature, create a merit to himself which puts him on a level with the rest of the world. But Sir, said I, are you one of this Cast, which distinguishes good company. By all means: I despise it, but yet I am of it. And you may have observ'd I never dared to speak before others as I now do before you; and when I beg'd you wou'd keep every thing I say a secret, my reason was, because it is of the utmost consequence I shou'd not be detected, and that no one shou'd know how far I carry disguise. Once more, I advise you to imitate me. If you do not, you'll pass for a man of a heavy genius, and unfit for society. The more you refuse to give into oddities, the more the world will be obstinate in accusing you of them. I am not the only one made sensible, that to avoid being thought ridiculous it is necessary to be, or at least to appear to be so. There are fewer sincere admirers of the *right Cast*, than is commonly imagin'd; some of those even who seem most enamour'd with it, are, however, persuaded as well as I, that to acquire the cast of real good company, a man shou'd be accomplish'd

compliſh'd without pedantry, and elegant without affectation, facetious without ribaldry, and free without impertinence.

WE might now, added he, proceed to women; but this converſation has already laſted ſo long, that with more connexion, and a cloſer examination of things, it might almoſt paſs for a treatiſe of morality. Let us then poſtponè the reſt to another day. If you have as great a deſire to learn as I have to inſtruct you, we ſhall ſoon meet again.

AT leaſt, ſaid I, be ſo good as to answer the queſtion I was going to propoſe to you. Why is it neceſſary that a woman ſhou'd introduce us into the world? Tho' plain this queſtion appears to you, there are ſo many things annex'd, that I cannot answer it without entering into a long detail. I took a particular pleaſure in the ſtudy of women, and at preſent I think I know them; this ſubject wou'd take up too much of your time. Then let us run it over lightly, another time we will dive into it. No, replied he, I ſhou'd have the ſame trouble, and you wou'd not be much the wiſer. Such a ſubject as this muſt be treated coherently, and deſerves your utmoſt attention.

I SHOU'D think for my part, ſaid I, that it is not working our own pleaſure to be ſo curious in the knowledge of women. That ſtudy when purſued too cloſely, occupies the mind when we ſhou'd be actuated by love alone. Beſides, I imagine
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it is better to have too great a dependance on the woman we love, than to examine her with too much severity. What! then you suppose, Sir, your beloved must lose by scrutiny? I know so little of women, that it wou'd be improper for me to determine what I ought to think; but, at the same time, I believe there are some ladies whom, until I receive your further instructions, I am at liberty to think as ill of as I please, Madam *Senanges*, for example, is one of that number. By all means, Sir, I can't prevent you, you may think as ill of her as you please, but remember I tell you, you will one day be asham'd of having abus'd her, nay, I shall hear you speak in raptures of her; I foresee every thing that will happen in consequence of the unjust dislike you have taken to her. You will be forc'd at last to pay tribute to her charms. And who knows but self-love is your only motive at present for disguising the impressiion she has made? Who knows, in fine, but this minute that you appear so pleas'd with her absence and silence, you sigh for her return, and grieve inwardly for her neglectfulness? If it be so, reply'd I, I must own the torments of love are very supportable; for nobody, sure, can think less of another, than I do of Madam *Senanges*. But I am surpriz'd Sir, where there are two women who seem to be pretty equal as to merit, you do not chuse to recommend the youngest, and indeed the least disagreeable. Madam *Mongennes*——? I have no objection to your liking her better, interrupted he, but I cannot in honour advise you to it, and without giving you my

my reasons, which wou'd lead me to far, I tell you plainly, *Senanges* is more proper for you than *Mon-gennes*: The latter in poffeffing you, wou'd esteem it no great happinefs to have gain'd you: The former wou'd never think ſhe cou'd glory too much in ſuch a prize; and at your age the preference is ever to be given to the moſt acknowledging, not to the youngeſt or the moſt amiable on her.

WE then took coach, the reſt of the time we were together, was employ'd on his ſide, in endeavouring to convince me how neceſſary it was that I ſhou'd take to Madam *Senanges*, and on mine in aſſuring him, it was a thing that cou'd never happen.

I WAS no ſooner at home, but, without reflecting much on all *Verſac* had ſaid, I return'd to my former occupation. To rave of *Hortenfia*, to grieve at her departure, and ſigh for her return, was all I cou'd think of.

THE ſo ardently-wiſh'd-for day came at laſt. I went to *Hortenfia*'s, and was inform'd that her mother and ſhe were come to town, but gone abroad. I imagin'd, I know not why, that they cou'd be no where but at Madam *Lurſay*'s; thither I flew with the wings of love. Too powerful an intereſt ſpirited me on, to be ballanc'd by the fear of ſeeing Madam *Lurſay* again; beſides, my reſentment againſt her was abated by time, and the reflections

reflections I had made on the injustice I had done her.

THERE was a numerous assembly at Madam *Lursay's*; but *Hortensia* was not there. However, the hopes of her coming, and the certainty that Madam *Lursay*, in the midst of so much company, wou'd find no opportunity of speaking to me, moderated my grief, and made me resolve to stay. She was at cards when I came in, and without seeming disturb'd or even mov'd at my appearance, she behav'd to me directly as she us'd to do, before there was of any thing between us.

AFTER paying me the usual compliments in all form, unaffected and unconstrain'd, she return'd to her cards. I seated myself by her; every now and then she turn'd to me, and made me notice the whimsicalness of the cards, but with a free unconcern'd air: She had so much vivacity in her eyes, her wit and humour were so unconfin'd, I cou'd no longer doubt but she had absolutely forgot me.

THE reasons I had for being desirous of her indifference, made me joyfully receive all the marks she cou'd give me of it. Tho' positively determin'd to break off with her, I knew not how to go about telling her I lov'd her no more. The respect she had inspir'd me with, work'd upon me like those prejudices contracted in child-hood, which we are forced to struggle with, and combat for a long time, before we can get the better of them.

WHATEVER

WHATEVER I thought at that time, the esteem I had had for her, ftill tyranniz'd over me, and compell'd me to difguife my sentiments. Of all things I dreaded an explanation, which cou'd never be but difadvantageous to me, fince in all her proceedings there was nothing to juftify my ficklenefs, and in mine every thing was blameable. Her defigns then fully answer'd my intentions: They put us in a way of breaking off at once without noife or lings, and deliver'd us from thofe fatal explanations which often create a greater animofity between two lovers who are about to part, than the very wrongs they have to complain of.

IN the midft of fo many joyful ideas, an emotion not to be accounted for,prung up in my heart. Charm'd to think ſhe had abandon'd me, I cou'd not conceive how ſhe had brought herſelf ſo suddenly to ſuch a reſolution. I fear'd, as I imagin'd, that her coldneſs was only affected, and that it was owing to nothing but the constraint ſhe was forced to, before ſo many witneſſes. Without knowing much of the matter, I imagin'd love was not to be extinguish'd all at once; that in a violent fit of jealouſy a perſon may reſolve loving no more, but that ſuch an intention can never be carried into immediate execution; that we often diſguiſe our ſentiments to ourſelves; that we even endeavour to conceal them from the object of our deſires; but that this diſſimulation coſts too dear to laſt for any time, and that weary at length of this feign'd tranquillity,

quility, we burst out into all the violence of ungovernable passion. According to these rules, I concluded Madam *Lursay* might not be quite so compos'd as she appear'd, and that perhaps I was unfortunate enough to be more lov'd than ever.

For the greater certainty, I studied her attentively; and the more I found, on examination, I had reason to think her in earnest, the more I felt the joy, which I had at first conceiv'd, diminish. Without knowing the cause, I abandon'd myself to all the bitterness of anxiety and discontent: A gloomy thoughtfulness succeeded in my soul; and still imagining I was overjoy'd at the loss of Madam *Lursay*, I ceas'd to be so much oblig'd to her for her inconstancy.

At last I began to consider what interest I cou'd possibly have in being so attentive to the motions of a woman whom I lov'd no longer, and whom indeed I was not conscious of having ever rightly lov'd. What care I if she has withdrawn her affections. Is not the dread of their continuance the greatest I have in the world?

I MADE several, I thought rational remarks on the occasion, so many indeed, that at length I imagin'd I had gain'd a compleat victory over my vanity. 'Twas not undesignedly that Madam *Lursay* did all she cou'd to mortify it, nor was she unsuccessful in the attempt.

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As foon as her party was over, ſhe ask'd me to play; I conſented. I was tir'd of looking on; beſides, I was in hopes by that amuſement, of baniſhing ideas which began to be troubleſome. I play'd then, but greatly diſtracted, and ſcarcely daring to look at Madam *Lurſay*, who without ſwerving in the leaſt from the ſerenity of her countenance, ſubmitted with intrepidity to all the remarks ſhe ſaw me making on her.

HITHERTO I had only reaſon to think I was no longer lov'd; ſhe had not yet given me room to believe ſhe lov'd another.

THE Marquiſs of *D*****, who was one of the party, and whom ſhe had brought with her from the country, was thought a proper perſon to give me uneaſineſs: She began to ſmile on him, to look earneſtly at him, and to dart ſome of thoſe glances which only become deciſive by frequent repetition.

CAREFUL not to go ſo far as to give him hopes, and draw on herſelf a declaration which wou'd have embarraſs'd her, ſhe did enough to make me believe that, not content to break off with me, ſhe had reſolv'd comforting herſelf for my loſs, and that this was certainly the beginning of a new adventure. I never look'd at her, that I did not find her eyes fix'd on the Marquiſs, and ſhe no ſooner perceiv'd my attention, but, with the utmoſt precipitation, ſhe brought them back again to her cards.

cards, as if I was the person from whom she had chiefly a mind to hide her inclinations.

THESE practices made me angry at last: Not that my heart was any ways interested; but I thought I was acting a disagreeable part, which she might very well have spared me. I felt such a contempt for her! She rais'd such indignation in my soul, that I cou'd scarcely contain!

VERSAC has not deceiv'd me, said I to myself, and I cannot conceive why such a woman as this is only to be call'd a coquet. Surely no woman ever behav'd with less reserve. That she shou'd cease to love me, is not surprizing, I am oblig'd to her for it, and God forbid I shou'd ever think of upbraiding her on that account! But that nothing shou'd make her ballance, that with more indecency than she can accuse Madam Senanges of, without so much as declaring she intended to break off with me, without being in the least constrain'd by my presence, without knowing for certain that I love her no more, she shou'd resign herself to this new lover, is I own, something beyond what I cou'd ever imagine. But she never lov'd me, thought I again; like *Pranzi* and a thousand others, I was no more than the object of her caprice. To morrow she will not know the man that pleases her to day, and I shall soon have the pleasure of seeing him succeeded by another.

WHILST

WHILST I was making thefe difadvantageous reflections on her, I had no manner of attention to myfelf; I look'd fo cold and fo blunt, 'twas impoffible for her to miftake what was paffing in my heart. Sallies of impatience escap'd me, which ſhe knew I was not fubject to at play, and which I cou'd not have then excus'd on that account. Every instant I look'd at my watch, and as if my own was not fufficient to tell me the hour, I confulted other people's. Twice Madam *Lurfay* queſtion'd me, without getting a direct anfwer. Stupidity had feiz'd me; but what's moſt extraordinary, thoſe various agitations were occaſion'd by a woman, to whom a moment before I ſhou'd gladly have ſaid, "Let us break off, never let us think of one another more;" whoſe hatred I ſhou'd have prefer'd to love, and whom the very thoughts of were become diſagreeable; in fine, the heart thus tortur'd with her inconfſtancy was intirely devoted to another.

WAS ever any thing fo whimfical? and yet we have the impudence to reproach women with vanity! We who are her conſtant ſport, who paſs as ſhe directs from love to hatred, and from hatred to love, and are always ready to ſacrifice the miſtreſs the moſt tenderly and deſervedly lov'd, to the woman in the world we love leaſt, and ſometimes deſpiſe moſt!

THIS

THIS was pretty nearly my situation. Without knowing it, I was insensibly yielding to Madam *Lursay*. My imagination, fired to think she cou'd so soon enter into a new engagement; the very thing which, if I had reflected at all, shou'd have alienated me for ever from her, was what made her sway over my heart more dreadful, than it had been at any time before.

HOWEVER, what she inspir'd me with, I cou'd not call love; I was hurried away by emotions I knew not how to distinguish: they were violent without the least tenderness, no soft desires intermix'd, and I had conceiv'd a jealousy without loving. Had she shewn me but a moment's tenderness, had she again appeared hasty and jealous, and taken pains to regain me, the charm wou'd have dispers'd; my vanity once satisfy'd with seeing her humbled, I shou'd no longer have look'd on her but as an object of indifference, and perhaps contempt.

BUT none of those things happen'd. Madam *Lursay* knew all the danger of undeceiving me. She was not oblig'd to study me, in order to find out what was passing in my soul. Her stratagem, tho' a trite one, had she behav'd in another manner, wou'd have had no effect; to make it succeed, 'twas necessary to push things to extremity. As yet I was only stagger'd, but she wanted to see me overcome.

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THE party was no fooner over, but, yielding to the firft impulse of vexation, I advanc'd to take my leave; but in fo aukward and constrain'd a manner, that ſhe eaſily perceiv'd there wou'd be no great difficulty in prevailing on me to ſtay.

WHERE are you going, Sir? ſaid ſhe with chearfulneſs. It is ſo late, you can't think of going any where; I was in hopes you intended ſupping here; I ſhall take it unkindly of you, if you offer to leave me. I imagine, Madam, ſaid I in ſome confuſion, you will be more oblig'd to me for going, I retire on purpoſe to give you pleaſure. I aſſure you Sir, I do not mean in the leaſt to conſtrain myſelf, by aſking you to ſtay. I have always been pleas'd to ſee you; and I cannot comprehend why you ſhou'd now think yourſelf one too many in my houſe. You are known to frequent it with great freedom, the world will be surpriz'd, and ſo ſhall I more than any body, to ſee you affect ceremonies a long time baniſh'd between us. I believe them, Madam, more neceſſary than ever.

WHAT a thought is there! ſaid ſhe ſhrugging up her ſhoulders; how unreaſonable you are! Far from it, Madam, for you know——. Well Sir, interrupted ſhe, riſing from her ſeat as if ſhe dreaded the leaſt explanation, you are at liberty to do as you pleaſe, I do not intend to force you. Stay,

Stay, and you will give me pleasure. Go, if my proposal be disagreeable.

I THOUGHT, by the coldness of her manner, she had the greater mind I shou'd go, and that undoubtedly her after-supper-hours were destin'd for the Marquis. I had a secret pleasure in thinking my presence wou'd incommode them, besides, I delighted myself with a notion of seeing Madam *Lursay* debase herself more and more in my eyes, and justify the contempt I imagin'd I felt for her.

IN a short time after supper was serv'd. Without reflecting, as I believ'd, and purely from habit, I wanted to seat myself by Madam *Lursay*. She perceiv'd my intention; but far from being oblig'd to me for it, she so contriv'd things, that the Marquis, whom I look'd upon as my successor, was advanc'd to my place. Tho' this preference was artfully conducted, it did not escape me; I was exasperated to the highest degree. Had she offer'd me the place, I shou'd certainly have refused it; but I cou'd not, without indignation, see it fill'd up by another.

MIRTH soon began to flow. Madam *Lursay*, who after mortifying my vanity had a mind to please, stopt at nothing to gain her ends. That alluring coquetry more powerful over us than beauty itself, those inticing glances we sometimes despise, but always yield to, the tenderest smiles, the sprightliest looks, she had recourse to every thing,

thing, but all to no purpofe. Perfuated that a defire only of engaging, and endearing herfelf to my rival, made her difplay fo many charms, I harden'd my heart againft them. Her gaiety and good-humour feem'd not to flow naturally, her wit ftudied and prepar'd, and the graceful airs ſhe gave herfelf, appear'd to me unbecoming her age. I confider'd every thing with a jealous eye. Anger and resentment fill'd my breaſt, but love had no ſhare in the diſturbance. At leaſt, deteſting Madam *Lurſay* as much as I did, had I not reaſon to doubt I thought her handſome?

MEN ſhew their defires too ſtrongly, and are generally too ſenſibly affected, to be able to hide them from a woman of the ſmalleſt penetration. Madam *Lurſay* was not a woman to be miſtaken in ſuch agitations as mine, ſhe knew by the coldneſs of my looks, ſhe did not make ſo lively an impreſſion as ſhe wiſh'd. I muſt ſuppoſe ſhe fear'd ſhe had prov'd too evidently ſhe had no more thoughts of me, ſince, without entirely abandoning her firſt deſigns, ſhe began to look at me with leſs indifference.

BUT this was not enough to ſatisfy me, and yet ſhe was in the right not to riſque more. Had I even at that time been ſeduced to the degree ſhe deſir'd, of what uſe cou'd a momentary ſeduction have been to her, which reflection wou'd have deſtroy'd, or which wou'd have diſpers'd of itſelf, before ſhe cou'd receive the benefit of it; her eagerneſs

ness wou'd only have worried my imagination, and perhaps made me less ardent at the time she wou'd require me to be most so?

SHE had sense enough to make these reflections, and no doubt she made them. For, all the time of supper, she continued to shew me no more attentions than what are usual in society, and which are not denied to men that women are acquainted with, tho' ever so indifferent to them. Her expressions were as guarded as her looks; in short, she behav'd so artfully, that, after giving me all the reason in the world to think she had broke off with me in earnest, that she was even far gone in another engagement, I had still some room to hope, in rising from table, it was not impossible to make her remember her former love, and move her again to as much tenderness as ever.

THO' not induc'd by vanity, it was but natural for me to think of regaining Madam *Lursay's* affections, desires commonly attend such emotions as I felt, but I really had none. It vex'd me to find Madam *Lursay* did not regret me, tho' I regretted her not; and immediately after supper, unmindful of the motives that had induc'd me to stay, I prepar'd to go out with some of the company.

LET her remain, said I to myself, with this happy lover who has usurp'd my place; together let them spend the most delicious night; what are their joys

joys to me, that I ſhou'd think of troubling them? I am not in love, why then ſhou'd I be jealous?

IN conſequence of this reaſoning, I roſe up, when the Marquis, whom I imagin'd ſo impatient to be alone with Madam *Lurſay*, told her he muſt take his leave. I expected to ſee her endeavouring to prevail on him to ſtay, but ſo far from that, ſhe gave him to underſtand in a cold manner, that he might if he pleaſed remain, at the ſame time letting him go without ſo much as ſettling a day for another interview. I was greatly ſurpriz'd at this. So much indifference, after what had paſs'd, did not ſeem to me natural. However, I was far from imagining they had no thoughts of one another, and that my ſuſpicions were groundleſs. I had obſerv'd them whiſpering for a conſiderable time, and during the converſation, ſhe look'd, I thought, myſterious and embarraſs'd: from whence I concluded, they had taken their meaſures, that this ſudden retreat of the Marquis was no more than a feint, and that the moment the reſt of the company were gone, he wou'd make his appearance again.

THIS was by no means a romantick notion, and I might entertain it without injuring either probability or cuſtom. I imagin'd beſides, there wou'd be as much ingenuity in diſturbſing, as there had been in diſcovering Madam *Lurſay*'s rendezvous. I maliciously determin'd to ſtay ſo long with her, that the Marquis ſhou'd not only loſe all patience,

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but even be convinc'd that, unless I had been made happy, and was still in the receipt of favours, 'twas impossible I cou'd dare to be so troublesome, as I intended he shou'd find me.

To these motives was join'd another I was not less sensible of, and which, more than all the rest, made me desirous of a particular conversation with Madam *Lursay*. I was persuaded she had deceiv'd me, and I thought I ought never to forgive her, for having endeavour'd to impose herself on me as a vertuous woman. Resolv'd to break off all correspondence with her, I believ'd my honour concern'd in letting her know all I had heard of her, and that I cou'd not too sufficiently prove she had lost all that esteem she once flatter'd herself she had inspir'd me with; that to execute this design, I cou'd not chuse a better moment than that which, in spite of the rigid vertue I had in vain by three months constant attendance and application endeavour'd to overcome, she had dedicated to a rendezvous with a man, who perhaps had neither leisure or inclination to solicit one. In fine, I represented to myself so pleasing and lively an image of her confusion and impatience, that I cou'd not think of foregoing so agreeable a sight.

WRAPT up in these delightful ideas, I waited impatiently for the moment in which I was to enjoy them; it came at length. I pretended to retire with the rest of the company, and took my leave of Madam *Lursay* with so unconcern'd an air, that

that ſhe ſeem'd quite diſmay'd. I ſtay'd for ſome time in the anti-chamber, whiſpering one of my ſervants, to whom I had nothing particular to ſay ; then, all the equipages gone, I return'd into the room.

I DISCOVER'D Madam *Lurſay* ſitting on a couch meditating profoundly. With whatever fortitude I had arm'd my mind, I no ſooner found myſelf alone with her, but I repented of the ſtep I had taken, and wiſh'd I had not imagin'd I had ſo many things to ſay to her. However, the neceſſity of extricating myſelf cleverly out of an adventure in which I had embark'd of my own accord, the reſentment I conceiv'd at ſight of her, and the pleaſure of mortifying her, reſtor'd me to my reſolution.

WHAT ! Sir, is it you ? ſaid ſhe in amaze. May I venture to aſk why you are come back ? What wou'd you have people think of your ſtaying here ? I imagine, Madam, answer'd I with a gibling air, you are not very uneaſy about what people may think, a more important concern diſturbs your breaſt. I never answer to what I don't underſtand, replied ſhe, nor ever inquire about what's indiffer-ent to me to know : So, Sir, without deſiring you to explain what you have ſaid, I have only to beg you'll do me the favour not to ſtay in my houſe at this hour. I am very ſenſible, Madam, how much I ſhou'd oblige you in going ; but it is no more than one a-clock, and you will do me a particular pleaſure in allowing me to ſpend a few hours more

with you. A very fair propofal truly ! answer'd ſhe mimicking my polite tone, but I am really concern'd it is not in my power to accept of it. I believe Madam, it is in your power, and I perhaps have things enough to ſay to you, which may hinder the moments I requeſt, from appearing tedious. Were I ever ſo willing to think ſo, the moments you chuſe are not the leſs improper ; beſides, you may have many things to ſay to me in which I ſhall take no manner of delight ; for, between ourſelves, and without intending to upbraid you, I don't find that hitherto you have amus'd me much. This night you ſhall be better pleas'd with me, Madam, the certainty of which, embolden'd me to make a requeſt I am not surpriz'd you ſhou'd think indiſcreet. I am ignorant of none of the reaſons that make it appear ſo. I know I am waſting moments you had deſtin'd to joys far beyond any pleaſure you can have in liſtning to me ; and that, beſides the torments you endure thro' my means, you have the impatience of another to ſhare in, who at the ſame time, perhaps, that he is miſerable to find his happineſs retarded, does not think you entirely innocent of the vexation I give him.

THAT is beyond diſpute, cried ſhe, the fineſt ſentence I ever heard ſpoke ! It is admirable for its elegance, obſcurity and length ! To become ſo very unintelligible, a man muſt puzzle his brain prodigiouſly ! Madam, if you give me leave, I'll ſpeak plainer. O ! by all means, reply'd ſhe haſtily ; I even entreat you will. I ſhall not be ſorry to know
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all the little ideas that flutter about your imagination : They muſt be very curious and uncommon.

BUT pardon me, Madam, thoſe ideas you think ſo curious and uncommon, are pretty univerſal. You kill me, Sir, with your preambles, ſaid ſhe with warmth, prithee come to the point. To the point then, Madam, ſaid I reddening with anger.

You flatter'd yourſelf for a long time, Madam, continued I, that you cou'd for ever impoſe on me, that I ſhou'd be ſo blinded with the fine reſiſtance you were pleas'd to make, as to think no man had ever touch'd your heart before me, and that I was to value your conqueſt accordingly. Such was your belief, and you were in the right.

—— Pray, Sir, ſit down, interrupted ſhe very calmly, this beginning promiſes ſomething of a tedious concluſion, and I ſhall be glad to ſee you at your eaſe.

I SEATED myſelf oppoſite to her, and, tho' ſomewhat diſconcerted at her ironical air, proceeded thus :

I WAS telling you, Madam, you were in the right to think I had plac'd my chief happineſs in pleaſing you. My youth and inexperience were ſure pledges of an eaſy credulity ; and had I been better inform'd, you wou'd have preſum'd leſs on that failing. There was no need of much artifice, leſs wou'd have done ; and it was having too good an opinion of me, to think all the wiles you prac-

tic'd necessary to deceive me. I do confess, Madam, I had such a blind implicit respect for you, I never dared one instant to doubt, but you were exactly the woman you chose to appear, that you had always liv'd out of the reach of love, that in vain your heart had been assail'd, and that I was the first who had ever made an impression there.—

You thought so, Sir, interrupted she; but methinks, at the same time you conceiv'd this advantageous opinion of me, you had no bad one of yourself. 'Twas not esteeming yourself a little, to believe that you had merit enough to seduce a woman, who, 'till you appear'd, had resisted so gloriously. Well! and in consequence of so modest an idea, what came next into your head? Don't upbraid me with it, Madam, replied I with some warmth, you gain more by it than I do. Had I consider'd you only as an ordinary woman, perhaps I shou'd have lov'd you less, and I dare say you wou'd not have been satisfied with a feeble liking, unworthy of your charms, and which in decency you cou'd not have rewarded.

My vast timidity, and the infinite trouble I had in speaking of my love, were sufficient to inform you I had no great hopes of pleasing, and to prove all the respect you had fill'd me with.

WHETHER a woman be respected or not, by a man of your age, she still looks upon him in the same light, and I don't understand how you can pretend

pretend to expect allowances for the effects of a fearfulness, which was more owing to your imbecility, than any respect you had for me.

WHATEVER it sprung from, Madam, my trouble and anxieties were not the less pleasing; and you shou'd have taken for so much incense, fears, which perhaps you were not intitled to create.

WHY then really, Sir, the pleasure they gave me was moderate enough. Ridiculous things do not amuse for any time. But proceed. Well! you were in the wrong to esteem me as much as you did, you are now sorry for it, isn't it so? What comes next?

MADAM, I have been undeceiv'd. I am inform'd how ill-judg'd my fears were; and I shou'd never forgive myself the ridiculous light they have thrown me into, were it not that the pleasure you took in seeing me subject to them, gave you alarms of another kind.

I DON'T deny, replied she with great calmness, but they made me act a simple part more than once; and that was the very reason why they cou'd afford me no sort of amusement.

I SHOU'D not be govern'd by them at this day, return'd I with a menacing tone.

It may perhaps be too late to think of shaking them off, replied she, and you had as good continue in them. But——tell me——my heart you say, has been much given to tenderness? No doubt you have all my adventures at your fingers ends; will you be so good as to give me the history of them?

I shou'd be afraid of trying your patience, Madam, answer'd I, greatly perplex'd at my own impatience, and the little she seem'd to make of it.

THAT's a short answer, reply'd she, and as malicious as impolite; but I forgive you. You don't even know how a woman is to be spoke to. What you have said, for example, is only wrong through your fault; better express'd, 'twou'd have been comical. But go on.

WITHOUT intending, replied I in a fury, to enter into a detail which wou'd be unnecessary, I have only to tell you, that I have learn'd enough to be sensible how falsely you have acted by me, and that as long as I live, I shall repent having been made your dupe.

In your turn, Sir, said she laughing, don't accuse me of that. You have not been the dupe of my subtleties; but of your own want of experience. Why shou'd you impute your blunders to me?
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Was it my business to let you know how much I was pleas'd with you, and tell you every moment how much the impression encreas'd? No doubt, this wou'd have been an obliging way of proceeding; but cou'd you have ever forgiven it me? Was it not your duty to watch, to discover, then seize the emotions of my heart? Am I to blame if they have all escap'd you? Did ever any man before you, think of reproaching a woman in the ridiculous manner in which you have reproach'd me? Was ever, at least, such a conclusion imagin'd?

I HAVE no more to do, reply'd I confounded with her way of answering me, but to felicitate you on your pretence of breaking off with me; on the secrecy with which you made that party to the country, which you did not inform me of until it was too late for me to attend you; and on your sudden passion for the Marquis, whom my presence obliges to lye conceal'd in a corner of your closet, and who, no doubt, waits impatiently for the moment of your dismissing me. And indeed I have so long retarded his happiness, I cannot think of being any longer troublesome. I must then——No, Sir, you must not stir, I have listen'd very patiently to you, and the least you can do is to grant me the same favour. I ask the Marquis's pardon, but were he to be ever so impatient of a conversation so little designed for him, I cannot deny myself the pleasure of answering you. Don't imagine it is any regard for you that makes me speak. My reputation is not in your power.—No, nor in the power of those who have.

have taken pains to blacken it. A man of your age can judge rationally of nothing, and still less of women than any thing else. You are neither qualified to be listen'd to, nor to be believ'd; and you may, without injury, think as ill of me, as you think well of yourself. The world will never judge of me by what you can say; my justification then is not what interests me, but the pleasure of confounding you, of unvailing your caprices and insincerity, of making you, in fine, ashamed of yourself.

I SHALL begin by speaking of myself; you'll not think it is out of any motive of self-love, since I am forced to call to mind certain transactions which do me no honour, and your usage is such, I cannot look back without despising myself for the errors you have made me commit.

You have been acquainted with me a long time. United to your mother by the tenderest ties of friendship, I lov'd you before I knew whether you were deserving of my love, before you knew yourself what it was to be belov'd, and without imagining the regard I conceiv'd for you, cou'd ever carry me the lengths I at last venture to own it has.

AND indeed what appearance was there of my ever having reason to fear loving you too much? Were it even possible for me to have foreseen you wou'd think of me, had I any right to suppose you cou'd

cou'd make me fufceptible, and that fo improbable an event wou'd one day fill up the archives of my life? No, I never thought it, nor have you that to reproach me; there's no woman but wou'd have fear'd you as little as I did, and to confider only your age and mine (fetting afide my way of thinking) my fecurity was very natural.

IT was then, not only without any apprehenfions for myfelf, but even without confidering in the leaft about you, that I faw you endeavouring to please me. Your attentions more particular, your vifits more frequent and longer, and the pleafure you feem'd to have in my company, appear'd to me, to be no more than the confequences of our former friendship. You were juft entering the world, you were beginning to be form'd, and it was but natural you fhould seek me with more warmth and affiduity, than when in your childhood. What you us'd to fay to me on the fubject of love, the eagerness with which you declar'd your mind, the difficulty I found in making you turn your thoughts to other matters, I look'd upon to be merely the confequences of a young man's curiofity, who is fond of every opportunity of informing himfelf in the particulars of a fentiment that begins to difturb his heart, or of ideas that occupy his imagination. I receiv'd no better information from your looks; and fo little defirous was I of pleafing you, that I cou'd never think I did please. At length your uneafinefs and perplexity made me curious to know what was paffing in your
foul.

soul, and imagining I was no more than confidante, I found myself principally interested in your secrets. You ought to remember how much I strove to dissuade you from a fanciful liking, which to me appear'd misplaced, and of which I was really sorry to be the object. My friendship for you, your youth, a sort of compassion, prevented me from imposing on you silence so severely as I shou'd have done. Besides, I imagin'd the manner in which a heart feels and conducts the emotions of a first passion, wou'd afford me some amusement. This amusement, which at first was not more dangerous than I had believ'd it would be, became so at last. I parted from you with more regret, impatiently I expected your return, and your presence, after you had spoke your sentiments, made me feel emotions which till then I had been an absolute stranger to. Then did I discover the dreadful necessity of flying you, but, alas! It was no longer in my power. An unaccountable charm, too weak in its birth for me to think there was any need of struggling with it, made me hang on your tongue. When you had done speaking, I us'd to repeat to myself what you had said. With difficulty, and always too late, I forced myself from the pleasure of hearing you. That frightful interval between your age and mine, and which at first had so sensibly affected me, disappear'd at once. Each day we spent together seem'd an addition to your years, and a diminution of mine. Love alone cou'd blind me to such a degree; and to think that we cou'd be made for one another, was too evident a proof of my passion, for
me

me to be mistaken in. Far from endeavouring any longer to disguise it to myself, I ventur'd boldly to found my heart ; and tho' the progress you had made there, was enough to terrify me, I did not however think myself depriv'd of all resource. As I did not wish to be overcome, I was loth to see that it was already my fate. Convinc'd at length of the excessive tenderness with which you inspir'd me, I, at least, sought means to delay my fall, and elude the shame and danger of the last weakness. In this design your want of experience was a great assistance to me, and I enjoy'd the full pleasure of seeing you in love, with the greater tranquillity, that I imagin'd irreparable guilt at a prodigious distance.

THEN, Sir, it is not extraordinary if I did not tell you I lov'd you, when, as yet, I lov'd you not. Nor is it more extraordinary that, after my sentiments were manifested to me, I did all I cou'd to conceal them from you. You shou'd have been attentive to discover them ; and, if I may venture to tell you so, it was you, and not I, who *were pleas'd to make a fine resistance.*

BUT, Madam, answer'd I, stammering, I thought no harm in telling you that——You yourself own you resisted, and you are sensible——You hesitate ! interrupted she, speak freely. What wou'd you have me say, Madam, replied I more disconcerted than ever ? my manner of expressing myself has been improper : I am heartily concern'd for
having

having displeas'd you, I——. But, finding I knew not what I was saying, it is late, and you are willing I shou'd take my leave. No, Sir, by no means; what I have still to say cannot be put off to another time, and the points I have yet to examine, are of the greatest importance to me.

AGAIN I sat down, greatly surpriz'd to find I was the person confounded. My perplexity augmented, when (without any reason I was sensible of) she order'd me to seat myself in an arm-chair that stood next to her couch; which brought me much nearer to her than I had been before. Trembling I obey'd, without daring to look at her, and with a sort of tender emotion, which the recital she had just made, forced me to. It is true then, continued she, that I lov'd you. I might safely deny it, since I never told you positively I did; but, after what has pass'd between us, such a subterfuge wou'd be as useless as preposterous, and it had been better for me to have told you a thousand times I lov'd you, than to have prov'd it to you once as I have done. Nay, I confess I have this further to reproach myself, that the happiness of not having yielded entirely, is more owing to you than my reason; and that, had you been sensible of all my weakness, I shou'd this day be the most unfortunate of women. Not that I esteem myself the more for having escap'd you; but as things are, it is a sort of consolation to think I did not sacrifice every thing to you.

SHE dwelt with fo much pleasure upon this consolation, and I thought myself at that instant so ridiculous for having allow'd it her, that I was just on the point of resolving to deprive her of an advantage she seem'd so vain of. I lifted up my eyes on her for a moment, and found her so exceedingly handsome! She was in so careless, so moving, and at the same time so modest a posture! Her eyes which she let fall tenderly on me, gave such assurances of love, that I felt all my faculties yielding to I know not what disorder, which at the same time that it dispos'd me to listen more attentively to her, render'd me still more absent.

You accuse me, added she still fixing my attention, of having endeavour'd to impose myself on you for a woman of virtue, such is my crime. Was there any thing for me to do that I shou'd not have done? If, in order to give you a good opinion of me, I was necessitated to disguise the mistakes I may have made, and conceal the unfortunate adventures I may have had, in short, that, without running the risque of losing you for ever, I cou'd not discover every thing that may have happen'd me, can you blame me for seeking to deceive you? Besides, had it been true that my youth was dishonour'd by some indecent sallies, is it impossible I shou'd be now reclaim'd? As yet, Sir, you cannot be sensible of it, but you will know hereafter, that women are not always to be judg'd by their first steps; that such a one appear'd to have

a corrupted mind, who had only an irregular imagination, or a weakness of constitution, which incapacitated her from resisting the torrent of bad example ; that if it be next to an impossibility to correct the vices of the heart, yet the errors of the mind are recoverable ; and that the woman who has been most addicted to gallantry, may purely by the strength of her own reflections, become the most virtuous wife, or the most faithful mistress.

FURTHER—you alledge, that I was willing to make you believe, that my affections had never been bestow'd on any man before you. If it be true that such was my intention, I am guilty of a strange piece of falsehood. No, Sir, I have lov'd, and that with all the violence imaginable. Had I had no experience in love, you wou'd not have seen me so terrified at its approach. This avowal perhaps will be a further inducement to you to despise me. To be compleatly deserving of your esteem, I shou'd, no doubt, have been disposed to love, by none but you alone. You never wish'd that more earnestly than I have done ; and when I began to love you, I felt infinite regret that my heart was not so new and genuine as yours, and that I had not its first fruits to offer you.

SUCH tender language ! The truth and violence of her passion were so strongly painted ! She supported her discourse with so moving an accent, that I cou'd not listen to her without being deeply affected, and greatly concern'd to be the cause of a woman's

woman's misfortune, whose beauty really was underserving fo cruel a destiny. This idea, on which I dwelt for some time, at length forced a sigh. Madam *Lurſay* had been too long expecting it, to let it eſcape. For an inſtant ſhe was ſilent, but her eyes were continually upon me. No doubt, ſhe wiſh'd and expected, that this ſigh wou'd have conducted me further; but obſerving I ſtill perſiſted in ſilence, ſhe went on thus :

You may now give a full ſcope to your imagination. I own I have lov'd, and that is ſufficient to make you conclude I only diſſemble a paſſion, the better to hide a looſe behaviour, and that there is nothing, be it ever ſo odious, of which I have not been capable. I was ſenſible in making the avowal, of all the danger I expos'd myſelf to; but I did not think I ought to have hid a thing from you, of which, had you deſir'd to be inform'd, I ſhou'd certainly have told you, and which, for ſeveral reaſons, I have leſs to reproach myſelf, than the love I conceiv'd for you, who, with all the failings incident to your age, have neither its candour or ſincerity. I don't think, ſaid I, piqued at this reproach, (but already perſuaded *Verſac* had deceiv'd me, and too much taken up with the charms which Madam *Lurſay* expos'd to my ſight, not to endeavour to appear innocent) I don't think, Madam, I have given you any reaſon to believe me inſincere. In ſome things I may be in the wrong, I'm even ſenſible I am, but what you have cauſe to complain of, is not of that heinous nature you repreſent; if you have any thing to reproach

reproach me, it is only with having been too credulous.

AND if you had lov'd me, said she feelingly, wou'd you even have been so? On the contrary, wou'd not you have taken my part against those who endeavour'd by calumny to blacken me in your eyes? Cou'd you, without lessening yourself, give credit to such vile aspersions? Shou'd not my deportment in life, to which you have been a constant witness for a considerable time past, have made you at least, suspend your judgment? I own that when a woman of my age forgets herself so far as to love a man of yours, she leaves herself liable to be thought less influenc'd by love, than a disorderly habit, and that the more her conduct is irreproachable, the more she is to blame for such an unexpected weakness, which disparity of years renders still more ridiculous. You shou'd not have suspected this to be my case; the greater the sacrifice, the more I swerv'd from my principles, the higher was your debt of gratitude and love. Any man but you wou'd have been sensible, that this tenderness alone was capable of reconciling me, to the irreparable faults mine made me commit, and that, in loving him, I had intrusted him with the quiet and happiness of my life; but, added she, turning to me with tears in her eyes, this way of thinking was not intended for you.

EVEN before you were certain of my love, you made me experience caprices, which you never so much.

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much as deign'd to excuſe, and which you ſeem'd concern'd I had forgiven you. I ſaw you at the ſame time fail in the moſt trifling duties, paſs of your own accord ſeveral days without ſeeing me, not mention your love but with all the coldneſs that cou'd prevent me from being favourable to it, in ſhort, behave in ſuch a manner, as prov'd you were leſs anxious to pleaſe, than deſirous to abandon me. If ſometimes you appear'd more animated, there was not *that* in your tranſports which cou'd excuſe my joining in them; and you never ſeem'd leſs influenc'd by love, than when you gave a looſe to your deſires. I was not blind to ſo unequal a behaviour, but at the ſame time that it pierc'd my heart with grief, it diverted not my inclinations from you. I thought you knew but little of the world, and was loth to condemn you entirely. I hop'd to ſee you loſe the roughneſs of your manners in the practice of love, receive with pleaſure the admonitions of the woman who lov'd you, and become at length what my ſoul wiſh'd you to be.

AH! Madam! cried I melted by her tears, and tranſported beyond myſelf, ſhall I be ſo unfortunate as never to ſee you take an intereſt in me again? No! continued I, kiſſing her hand with tranſport, you muſt reſtore me to favour; I'll make myſelf worthy.——No, *Meilcour*, interrupted ſhe, I can no longer hope to find you as tender as my heart deſires. The tranſports in which I now ſee you, can neither flatter or ſeduce me. Were I younger, and of courſe more giddy, I might per-
haps

haps mistake your desires for love. I shou'd be soften'd, and you wou'd be justified ; but you have already experienced, on an occasion when I might have yielded without having any thing to reproach myself, for then I had reason to think I was lov'd, that equal tenderness alone can give you victory. What I then refus'd, I have now less reason than ever to grant. Had it been true that I was mistaken in believing you in love with Madam *Senanges*, the manner in which you answer'd me on her account, is a proof that you are neither to be preserv'd or reclaim'd.

BUT is it possible, Madam, said I tenderly, that your fears about Madam *Senanges* cou'd be real ? Can you imagine, had she shewn ever so much willingness to engage me, but I shou'd have disdain'd her attentions ? Yes, Sir, reply'd she, Madam *Senanges* might have been still less pleasing, you might have lov'd me infinitely more than you did, and yet she wou'd have carried her point. You wou'd not perhaps have been constant to her ; but she wou'd have seduc'd you, and that was all she cou'd pretend to. Were it true that you had so much indifference for her, why did you make it your business to see her again, and why, the very day I told you I had no mind you shou'd be acquainted with her, did I meet you together at the *Thuilleries* ? If you lov'd me, what reason cou'd you have for not coming to the country ? That party, you say, was made secretly. The mystery was not very great, you were the sole object of it.

I wanted.

I wanted to take you from Madam *Senanges*, and that was the only method I had left. Instead of penetrating, or at least appearing to have penetrated the true motive of this party, you imagine I contriv'd it for the more commodiously seeing the Marquis. I have but one word to say to you on that head. Had I a liking to him, you are the last person in the world, after what has pass'd between us, whom I shou'd have chose for a spectator. You see I abridge the wrongs you have done me, and don't insist on them. Not that I shou'd find any difficulty in calling them all to mind, but to reproach, supposes love, and you are sensible that is no longer in my power.

AN Madam! cried I, so disorder'd that I was incapable of reflection, never did you love me. Never cou'd you find in your heart to see my despair with so much tranquillity; you wou'd be mov'd to compassion, had you ever lov'd me so tenderly as you say you did.

Is it possible then, *Meilcour*, that I can still flatter myself with being dear to you? Shou'd I even wish it? Is it certain that you are sorry to lose me? Who have left nothing undone to displease me, who thought the only way to justify yourself was to criminate me, and scrupled not to affirm that the Marquis is such an intimate of mine, that I have him actually conceal'd in my closet.

How

How can you again return to that subject, are you not convinc'd, Madam, my heart has fully acquitted you? Yes, answer'd she laughing, I see I am now all innocence, but I shall not be surpriz'd if you think differently to morrow.

Will you never then, Madam, cease to object such groundless fears? Ah! *Meilcour*, cried she in a more moving accent, I am too deeply concern'd in the debate now between us, to think of giving it up so quietly, I am undone if I'm not made happy. No——replied I, pressing her in my arms, my tenderness shall leave you nothing to desire.

BUT, *Meilcour*, said she, seemingly in a trance, can't you be content with my friendship? Consider I shall never prefer any man to you, and, except a trifle, I shall love you most tenderly? Believe me, added she, looking on me, her eyes at the same time animated with all the symptoms of the most violent passion, what I refuse is not worth what I offer you. No, said I throwing myself at her feet and more inflam'd by her resistance, no, you must restore me to all I have lost. Ah! cruel man! replied she sighing, wou'd you make me miserable all the days of my life? Have you not already had sufficient proofs of my tenderness? rise, added she in an expiring voice, you see but too well that I love you. May you one day prove to me an equal passion!

CONCLUDING

CONCLUDING these words, ſhe caſt down her eyes, as if aſham'd of having ſaid ſo much. Tho' the latter part of our converſation became very ſerious, I perfectly remember'd how much *Madam Lurſay* ridicul'd my fears. I preſs'd her tenderly to look on me. She conſented; our eyes met. I found in hers that voluptuouſneſs with which they were charg'd, the day ſhe taught me by what progrefſions pleaſures are to be attain'd, and how much love ſubdivides them. Grown bolder, but ſtill too timorous, trembling I attempted how far her indulgence wou'd carry her. My tranſports ſeem'd to augment her charms, and make her more deſirable. Her looks, her ſighs, her ſilence, every thing inform'd me, tho' ſomewhat late, how exceſſively ſhe lov'd me. I was too young not to think my paſſion equal to hers. The gratification of the ſenſes, I miſtook for the overflowings of the heart. I abandon'd myſelf to all the inſatuation of that dangerous moment, and became, in fine, as guilty as I cou'd poſſibly be.

I CONFESS I took delight in my crime, and whether my illuſion was ſupported by the evil propenſity of my age, or prolong'd by *Madam Lurſay's* charms, I continued in it a long time. Far from reflecting on my infidelity, I thought of nothing but enjoying my victory, which was render'd more precious by all I imagin'd it had coſt me; and tho' in reality I had only triumph'd over difficulties which I had thrown in my own way, I was nevertheleſs

theless persuaded she had made a prodigious resistance. I had no sooner possess'd her, than I felt all my esteem reviving, I carried my blindness so far as to forget all the lovers *Versac* had enumerated for her, nay, I forgot the one she herself had just own'd to. The only thing I now wish'd for, was the continuance of her love; her charms flatter'd my senses, and her fondness which appear'd to me extreme, communicated itself to my soul, and there diffus'd the most pleasing disturbance.

At length I felt my error diminishing, but not enough to make me think of repentance. Yet by degrees I shou'd have fallen into reflection, had Madam *Lursay* been so good as not to interrupt me; but unfortunately for my reason, she perceiv'd me thoughtful, at which she shew'd a sort of uneasiness, in which it wou'd have been ungenerous in me to have left her, nor indeed did she deserve I shou'd. I gave her then fresh assurances of love. Never was mistress less vain and more timid. The more I prais'd her charms, the more I contemplated them, the less, she said, she dared to flatter herself with their influence over me. I appeared transported, yet perhaps I did not love. Was she forced to acknowledge I lov'd her, her mind was not the more compos'd. After abandoning herself to fears, she return'd to transports; a perpetual succession of the tenderest good humour, of the most enticing wantonness, of every thing, in fine, most charming in unconstrain'd love, hurry'd me into such agitations

and

and extaſies, that I became quite unfit for any ſerious reflection.

THO' much I was enchanted, my eyes open'd at length. Without knowing what was deficient, I felt a *void* in my ſoul. My imagination alone had been ſtruck, and in order to eſcape falling into dejection, I found it neceſſary to ſpirit it up. Still I was eager, but leſs ardent. I continued to admire, but I ceaſ'd to be mov'd. In vain I ſtrove to excite in me a return of my firſt tranſports. Madam *Lurſay* receiv'd no more marks of fondneſs from me, but what were accompanied with an air of conſtraint, and I began to reproach myſelf the ſmalleſt deſires her beauty ſtill extorted from me.

HORTENSIA, the dear *Hortensia* whom I ador'd, tho' I had ſo compleatly forgot her, reſum'd her empire in my breaſt. The vivacity of my returning ſentiments, made what had paſſ'd appear the more inconceivable. Was it not entirely in hopes of ſeeing her that I came to Madam *Lurſay*'s, ſaid I to myſelf? And during both their abſences, was not ſhe the only one I regretted? By what enchantment am I now engag'd with a woman whom this very day I deteſted?

I HAD the more reaſon to wonder at my ſituation, that I had been vain and jealous without knowing it, and was inſenſible of the ſway thoſe two paſſions had over me. After all, it was but natural that Madam *Lurſay*, who to a conſiderable

share of beauty join'd a thorough knowledge of the heart, shou'd conduct me imperceptibly as far as I went. All I know of the matter at this day is, that with more experience on my side, I shou'd have been the sooner seduc'd; what they call usage of the world, serving only to enlighten us, in proportion as it corrupts us.

THAT usage then wou'd have satisfied me how shameful a thing it is to be constant. I shou'd not, it is true, have been influenc'd by tenderness, for it wou'd have appear'd ridiculous in Madam *Lursay*; and to gain her ends she must have been really as despicable as she endeavour'd to appear the reverse. *Hortensia's* idea, far from being banish'd my memory, wou'd have possess'd it most agreeably. In the very midst of the amorous disturbance which Madam *Lursay's* charms wou'd have rais'd, I shou'd have curs'd that custom which forbids us to resist the woman who takes a liking to us; my heart wou'd have been safe from the disorder of my senses; and by those nice distinctions, which may very properly be call'd the quietism of love, I shou'd, without remorse or danger of infidelity, have revell'd on occasional delights.

BUT this convenient metaphysick was unknown to me; with infinite regret I saw how much I had deceiv'd myself. Madam *Lursay's* eager attentions augmented for some time my disquiet; but whether I grew weary of self-condemnation, whether I fear'd reproaches, which I shou'd not have known how to answer

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answer, or that ftill a prey to infatuation, love operated but faintly on me; I fummon'd all my ftrength againft an idea that began to be importunate. Stolen from pleasures by remorse, wrested from remorse by pleasure; not a moment cou'd I depend upon myfelf. To my fhame I confeſs it, I endeavour'd ſometimes to reconcile my proceedings to myfelf, and wou'd by no means be convinc'd that I had in any ſhape wrong'd *Hortenfia*, ſince ſhe lov'd me not, ſince I had promis'd her nothing, and cou'd never hope to owe her ſo many obligations as I ow'd to Madam *Lurſay*.

My mind was eaſily perſuaded this reaſoning was juſt; but I cou'd not with the ſame facility deceive my heart. Sinking under the bitterneſs of inward reproach, unable to triumph over it, I ſtrove to divert it, I ſtrove by wandering a-new to baniſh the importunate remembrance of her, who in ſpite of me, was ſtill preſent to my heart. But I ſtrove in vain, every inſtant made me appear more criminal to myſelf, without the leaſt appearance of tranquillity.

SOME hours were ſpent in theſe contradictions, and day began to appear when I was yet far from being conſiſtent with myſelf. Thanks to Madam *Lurſay*'s ſtrict adherence to decorum, ſhe diſmiſs'd me at laſt; at parting I promis'd, in ſpite of my remorse, to ſee her again early the next day, and what's more extraordinary, I fully reſolv'd to keep my word.

End of the THIRD PART.